

Mario Liverani

INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS IN THE
ANCIENT NEAR
EAST, 1690–1100 BC

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International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600–1100 BC

Mario Liverani

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palgrave



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Preface

The present book has a long history that is necessary to summarize here. In 1970, when acting as Director of the Research Project on 'Political Conceptions in the Ancient Near East' (sponsored by the Italian CNR), I planned a collective work on the international relations of the Near East in the Late Bronze age. The original plan included an introduction to the subject (by myself), a chapter on the exchange of gifts (by C. Zaccagnini), one on matrimonial exchange (by F. Pintore) and one on the exchange of letters (by G. Del Monte). But very soon it became clear that the original 'chapters' were growing into books, which (Del Monte excepted) eventually happened: that by C. Zaccagnini was published in 1973 as *Lo scambio dei doni nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV–XIII*, and that by F. Pintore was published in 1978 as *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV–XIII*. My 'introduction' had also begun to assume book proportions, and I worked intensively on it during the early 1970s, being later on distracted by more urgent tasks and by periods of low productivity. In 1984 I took the opportunity of a sabbatical year to resume work on the subject and write the basic manuscript; this was done in Chicago. Back in Rome, I was again distracted by various engagements until the period from January to July 1989, which I was able to keep entirely free in order to complete the book.

A first edition appeared in 1990, as *Prestige and Interest. International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600–1100 B.C.* (Padua: Sargon). This was basically devoted to the specialized audience of ancient Near Eastern scholars and, as a result, was filled with philological details and minute bibliographical references. An Italian edition appeared in 1994, as *Guerra e diplomazia nell'antico Oriente, 1600–1100 a.C.* (Rome and Bari: Laterza). This was devoted chiefly to a larger audience of Italian readers, with no philological details, drastically selected bibliography and illustrations. The very limited impression of the English-language Padua edition had in the meantime completely sold out.

In September 1996, on the occasion of the Rockefeller-funded conference in Bellagio on 'Amarna Diplomacy', the papers of which were eventually published under the editorship of R. Cohen and R. Westbrook as *Amarna Diplomacy. The Beginnings of International Relations* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), I met Professor Geoffrey Berridge. He suggested that I publish in a revised form my *Prestige and Interest*, a book

that was so often quoted during the conference but had remained practically unknown to historians of diplomacy.

I have to thank Professor Berridge for his kind invitation, and for inclusion of my revised book in his series 'Studies in Diplomacy'. The present book is a substantially revised edition, with a new chapter and many relevant additions and corrections, and with use of an updated bibliography and new documents published in the last ten years. The book is now devoted especially to non-Orientalists: historians of diplomacy and of international relations. It is therefore much more 'readable' than the first edition, without the philological details and excessively minute discussions which have no relevance for a correct understanding of the political interrelationships of the place and time. I have also to thank the previous publishers, Sargon and Laterza, for generously allowing me to make free use of my work, and the new publisher, Palgrave, for boldly accepting a book with such a complicated history and waiting patiently for delivery of my final manuscript.

A book written over a period of twenty years (not because of the amount of material used or of the analysis carried on but because of long intermissions) is clearly one with which the author was on rather difficult terms. And of course my ideas underwent substantial changes through the period. My Polanyian approach of the early 1970s (even if already at that time an unorthodox one) was in part dismissed later on. The broad anthropological and historical perspectives needed for my approach required a fairly large amount of reading outside the ancient Near Eastern field (most of it not explicitly mentioned in the notes), which had to be artificially cut down at some point in order to allow for completion of the work. In particular the last and most sophisticated developments in political anthropology (the 'landscape of power' and generally the techniques of simulation) arrived when I was already too old to be able to change my methodology and make real use of them.

During these twenty years, my attitude has alternated between enthusiasm for discovering a 'key' of great explanatory power, and the feeling that the key was so obvious that everyone should know or could discover it. But the main difficulty has been to make direct use of sources in the many different languages of the ancient Near East – a difficulty unavoidable for any historical study but especially evident in the subject of their international relations. It is not so much a problem of avoiding 'mistakes' (that can generally be eliminated with the help of colleagues specialized in the different languages), but essentially a problem of best exploiting the wealth of information contained in the texts, a type of information available only if we really enter the semantic and syntactic

subtleties of the various languages and get an adequate feeling for their basic structure and meaningful nuances.

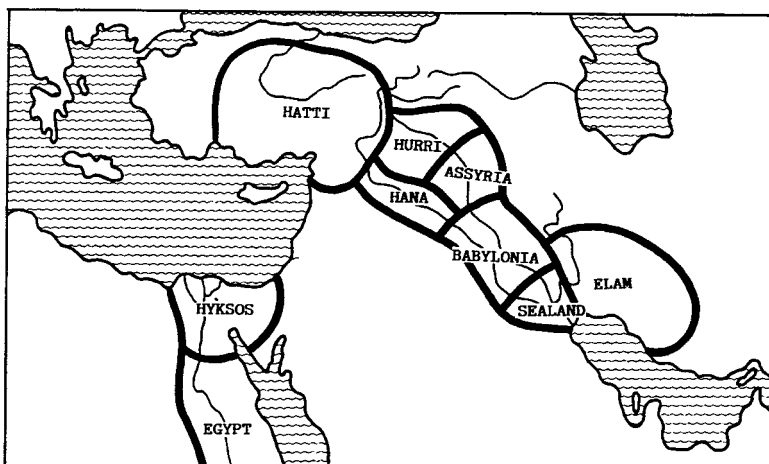
Moreover, such a book also requires (or should require) some amount of competence in the field of history of diplomacy and more generally of international relations – a field obviously centred on the modern world and therefore quite distant from my scholarly competence. In preparing the present edition, I decided that a cursory reading of some books on the subject would be insufficient and useless. Therefore, from this point of view the book remained as it was in its first edition, in the hope that readers already acquainted with the history of diplomacy would appreciate it for its contributions of imperfectly known data from remote antiquity, rather than for an awkward attempt to insert such data into the well-established methodology of studies in diplomacy.

All this means that it is practically impossible to publish a book like this, while at the same time be convinced that it is in fact complete and satisfactory. The fact that I am now publishing it in its present form means acknowledging the limited extent of my competence but also respecting all of the work I have done in preparing it – whatever be the distance from an impossibly 'definitive' book.

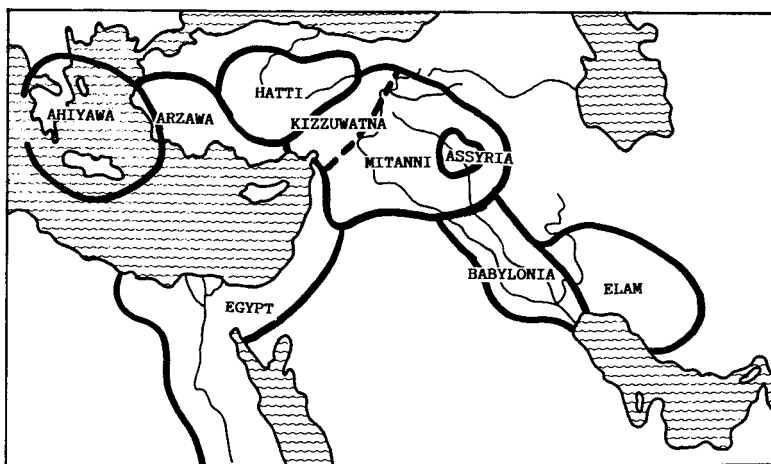
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Rome, July 1989 and July 2000

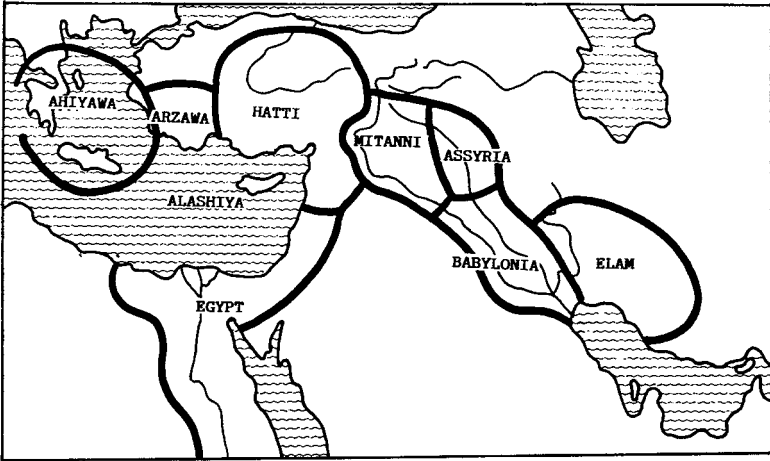
Maps: the Near Eastern political system



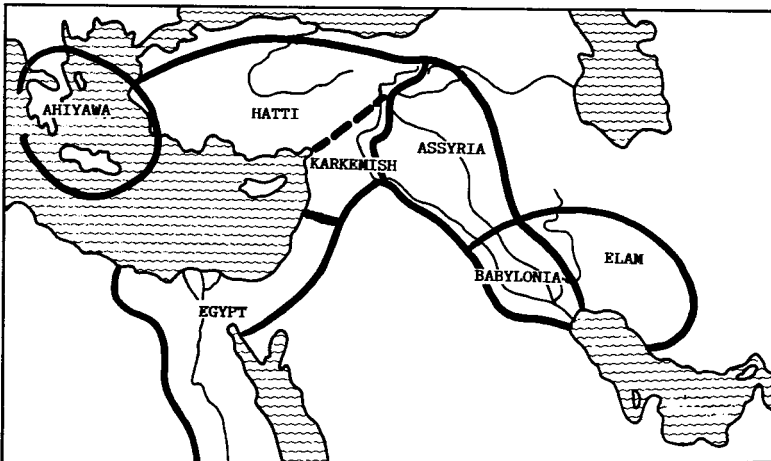
c. 1600 BC



c. 1450 BC



c. 1350 BC



c. 1220 BC

Abbreviations

Collections of texts in translation

ABC	A. K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> (Locust Valley, NY, 1975)
AEL	M. Lichtheim, <i>Ancient Egyptian Literature</i> , I–III (Berkeley, CA, 1976)
AH	H. Otten, <i>Die Apologie Hattusilis III</i> (Wiesbaden, 1981)
ÄHK	E. Edel, <i>Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi</i> , I–II (Opladen, 1994)
AM	A. Götze, <i>Die Annalen des Muršiliš</i> (Leipzig, 1933)
ANEP	J. B. Pritchard, <i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures</i> (Princeton, NJ, 1954)
ANET	J. B. Pritchard (ed.), <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</i> , 2nd edition (Princeton, NJ, 1969)
ARE	J. H. Breasted, <i>Ancient Records of Egypt</i> , I–V (Chicago, IL, 1906)
ARI	A. K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian Royal Inscriptions</i> , I–II (Wiesbaden, 1972–6)
AU	F. Sommer, <i>Die Ahhijavâ-Urkunden</i> (Munich, 1932)
BM	B. Foster, <i>Before the Muses</i> , I–II (Bethesda, MD, 1993)
EA	W. L. Moran, <i>The Amarna Letters</i> (Baltimore, MD, 1992)
EHR	B. Cumming, <i>Egyptian Historical Records of the Late Eighteenth Dynasty</i> , I–II (Warminster, 1982–4)
ET	I. Hoffmann, <i>Der Erlass Telipinus</i> (Heidelberg, 1984)
HDT	G. Beckman, <i>Hittite Diplomatic Texts</i> (Atlanta, GA, 1996)
HRR	W. F. Edgerton and J. A. Wilson, <i>Historical Records of Ramses III</i> (Chicago, IL, 1936)
KH	A. Hagenbuchner, <i>Die Korrespondenz der Hethiter</i> , I–II (Heidelberg, 1989)
KRIT	K. Kitchen, <i>Ramesside Inscriptions. Translations</i> , I–II (Oxford, 1993–6)
LEM	R. Caminos, <i>Late Egyptian Miscellanies</i> (London, 1954)
LM	A. L. Oppenheim, <i>Letters from Mesopotamia</i> (Chicago, IL, 1967)
PRU	J. Nougayrol and Ch. Virolleaud, <i>Le palais royal d'Ugarit</i> , II–VI (Paris, 1955–70)

RIMA	A. K. Grayson, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Assyrian Periods</i> , I–III (Toronto, 1987–96)
Ug.	<i>Ugaritica</i> , V–VI (Paris, 1968–9)

Journals

AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AION	<i>Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli</i>
AIPHOS	<i>Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves</i>
AnSt	<i>Anatolian Studies</i>
AOF	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i>
AuOr	<i>Aula Orientale</i>
BaM	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale</i>
BO	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CdÉ	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
DaM	<i>Damaszener Mitteilungen</i>
ErIs	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
GM	<i>Göttinger Miszellen</i>
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JARCE	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JEOL	<i>Jaarbericht 'Ex Oriente Lux'</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
JKF	<i>Jahrbuch für Kleinasiatische Forschung</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JSEA	<i>Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities</i>
LAAA	<i>(Liverpool) Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology</i>
MANE	<i>Monographs on the Ancient Near East</i>
MAOG	<i>Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft</i>
MDIK	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Kairo</i>
MDOG	<i>Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft</i>
MIOF	<i>Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung</i>
OA	<i>Oriens Antiquus</i>

OLZ	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>
Or	<i>Orientalia</i>
RA	<i>Revue d'Assyriologie</i>
RANL	<i>Rendiconti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei</i>
RÉ	<i>Revue d'Égyptologie</i>
RHA	<i>Revue Hittite et Asianique</i>
RSF	<i>Rivista di Studi Fenici</i>
RSO	<i>Rivista degli Studi Orientali</i>
SAAB	<i>State Archives of Assyria. Bulletin</i>
SAK	<i>Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur</i>
SMEA	<i>Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici</i>
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
VO	<i>Vicino Oriente</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WO	<i>Welt des Orients</i>
WZKM	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
ZÄS	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>

Dictionaries and handbooks

CAD	<i>The (Chicago) Assyrian Dictionary</i> , 1–21 (Chicago, IL, 1962ff.)
EAK	R. Borger, <i>Einleitung in die assyrischen Königsinschriften</i> , I (Leiden and Cologne, 1961)
ERAS	M. J. Seux, <i>Epithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes</i> (Paris 1967)
LA	W. Helck and E. Otto (eds), <i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> , I–VI (Wiesbaden, 1975–86)
MHT	A. Kammenhuber (ed.), <i>Materialien zu einem hethitischen Thesaurus</i> (Heidelberg, 1973ff.)
RIA	E. Ebeling, B. Meissner, E. Weidner, W. von Soden and D. O. Edzard (eds), <i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i> , I–VI (Berlin and Leipzig, 1928–83)
THAT	E. Jenni and C. Westermann (eds), <i>Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> , I–II (Munich and Zürich, 1971–6)
TWAT	G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds), <i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> , I–V (Stuttgart, 1970–86)

- Wb. A. Erman and H. Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, I–V (Leipzig, 1926–31)

Monographs

Goedicke, *Wenamun*

H. Goedicke, *The Report of Wenamun* (Baltimore, MD, 1975)

Goetze, *Kizzuwatna*

A. Goetze, *Kizzuwatna and the Problem of Hittite Geography* (New Haven, CT, 1940)

Grapow, *Ausdrücke*

H. Grapow, *Die bildlichen Ausdrücke des Aegyptischen* (Leipzig, 1924)

Grimal, *Propagande*

N. C. Grimal, *Les termes de la propagande royale égyptienne de la XIX^e dynastie* (Paris, 1986)

Habachi, *Kamose*

L. Habachi, *The Second Stela of Kamose* (Glückstadt, 1972)

Harraak, *Hanigalbat*

A. Harraak, *Assyria and Hanigalbat* (Hildesheim, 1987)

Heinhold-Krahmer, *Arzawa*

S. Heinhold-Krahmer, *Arzawa. Untersuchungen zu seiner Geschichte* (Heidelberg, 1977)

Helck, *Beziehungen*

W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden, 1962)

Kestemont, *Diplomatique*

G. Kestemont, *Diplomatique et droit international en Asie Occidentale (1600–1200 av. J. C.)* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1974)

Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma*

K. A. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs* (Liverpool, 1962)

Korošec, *Staatsverträge*

V. Korošec, *Hethitische Staatsverträge* (Leipzig, 1931)

Lorton, *Terminology*

D. Lorton, *The Juridical Terminology of International Relations in Egyptian Texts through Dyn. XVIII* (Baltimore, MD, 1974)

Oded, *War*

B. Oded, *War, Peace and Empire. Justifications for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (Wiesbaden, 1992)

Pintore, *Matrimonio*

F. Pintore, *Il matrimonio interdinastico nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV–XIII* (Rome, 1978)

Spalinger, *Documents*

A. Spalinger, *Aspects of the Military Documents of the Ancient Egyptians* (New Haven, CT, 1982)

Von der Way, *Textüberlieferung*

The. von der Way, *Die Textüberlieferung Ramses' II. zur Qadeš-Schlacht* (Hildesheim, 1984)

von Schuler, *Kaşkāer*

E. von Schuler, *Die Kaşkāer. Ein Beitrag zur Ethnographie des alten Kleinasien* (Berlin, 1965)

Zaccagnini, *Scambio*

C. Zaccagnini, *Lo scambio dei doni nel Vicino Oriente durante i secoli XV–XIII* (Rome, 1973)

Introduction

The 'first' diplomacy

The history of international relations, as conceived by the majority of scholars engaged in it, is limited to the modern and contemporary worlds. An exact date for its beginning can be disputed, but historical research going back just a few centuries before contemporary events acquires the value of an antiquarian curiosity rather than a sound functional exercise. Yet the subject of the discipline, namely the formalized norms and procedures keeping states in mutual relation, can be applied to every society – wherever located in time and space – after the rise of 'states', these being defined as politically and administratively organized communities which underwent their first attested formative development in the Near East (Egypt and Mesopotamia) around the end of the fourth millennium BC. And in fact some handbooks or general histories of international relations do include ancient Near Eastern data in a first chapter.¹

While it is interesting to compare the 'international relations' formalized in early state formations with those obtaining in our modern world,² a correct historical evaluation of the 'archaic' systems can only be accomplished by embedding them in their own technological, social and cultural settings. The question is not about their similarity to modern systems, but about the functionality of their procedures to the needs of their time. This is as true of their diplomacy, or for that matter their international relations in general, as anything else – provided that their inter-state relations reached a level at which their norms and procedures were both formalized and shared.

In the course of the last century, archaeological discoveries in Egypt and the Near East brought to the attention of historians a variety of more and

more remote cases of archives documenting periods of intensive inter-state interaction. The 'Late Bronze period' (c. 1600–1200 BC) was first brought to the fore by the discovery of the Amarna archive (1887),³ to be later complemented by the Hittite archives in Boghazköy (1906–7)⁴ and the archives of the Syrian town of Ugarit (1951–7).⁵ In the meantime an older 'international period' had been revealed by the Mari archives (1933–9), so that the label 'Mari age' became current for the eighteenth to seventeenth centuries BC.⁶ More recently, the discovery of the Ebla archives (1975) has pushed back in time the history of inter-state relations to the 'Ebla age' in the twenty-fourth century BC.⁷

Definitions such as 'the first diplomacy' or 'the beginnings of international relations',⁸ as applied to the Late Bronze period are therefore naive in perspective and factually wrong. It remains true nevertheless that this period provides a unique opportunity for studies on the topic. In contrast to the Mari and Ebla cases, Late Bronze inter-state relations are documented by texts stemming from a variety of locations (Egypt, Hittite Anatolia, northern Syria, Assyria and Babylonia) and belonging to a variety of types (letters, treaties, literary and administrative texts). Our case study is therefore the first in terms of its complexity rather than its date (which is not the most remote recorded). The attempt will be made to demonstrate that inter-state relations were in fact quite formalized, according to juridical rules and rules of behaviour that were accepted by states belonging to different cultural traditions. In this sense we have in the Late Bronze period a 'fully-fledged diplomatic system',⁹ perhaps not according to the requirements of modern scholarship but certainly according to the appreciation of people and communities of that time.

The regional system of the Late Bronze Age

The Late Bronze period (ca. 1550–1200 BC) in general, and the 'Amarna age' in particular, are a privileged case for the study of international relations in the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean. This is because the relevant documentation is widely if not uniformly distributed over the whole area, from Egypt, through Syria-Palestine, Anatolia, Upper Mesopotamia, to Babylonia and Elam, and includes – to a much larger extent than in any other period – texts specifically intended to formalize its international relations. The amount and quality of the relevant texts also seem to be sufficient to reflect the typical arrangements and specific trends in the political world of the time.

It is not so much a question of the intensity characterizing the international relations of this epoch, or of the distances covered – both

seem to have been quite impressive in earlier periods, from the long-distance trade of the proto-historical era to the networks revealed by the Ebla and Mari archives. It is rather a question of these relations being more clearly structured into a system encompassing the whole area, and taking into account the coexistence of different political units of regional significance, the opportunity to establish a fixed hierarchy inside the regional units but a conventional parity of rank between them, the aim being to preserve the existing balance of power. Not by chance a 'diplomatic' language, Akkadian, is employed throughout the area; the habit of recording the politically and juridically relevant inter-state documents in bilingual texts becomes usual; and (even beyond the existence of actual bilingual texts) the technical terminology and phraseology of politics becomes largely common, filled with semantic calques and loanwords, in order to reproduce a largely common, even if somewhat conventional, view of political relationships. Not by chance, from the archaeological point of view the Late Bronze period also marks the apex of the circulation of specialized techniques, iconographic motifs, precious materials and worked objects, building up a flavour of 'international' culture above and beyond the strong persistence of the local 'original features'.

In a broad chronological perspective, the equilibrium achieved between the regional powers (Egypt, Hatti, Mitanni, Assyria, Babylonia, Elam) is the outcome of the long and not entirely clear processes by means of which they were formed through the unification of the previous 'cantonal' (city-centred) political units. During the 'balance of power' period, the regional political units are rather evenly distributed so as to cover all the Near Eastern area (with a few empty or 'weak' spaces left between them), and none has yet reached the military, technological or organizational level that will make a further step possible: that of an 'imperial' unification of the Near East. This will be attainable only after the collapse of the 'regional system' at the end of the Bronze age,¹⁰ and (significantly enough) when a part of the area has reverted to a political organization of 'cantonal' extent, thus offering to the extant regional states the opportunity for a further growth through annexation of their 'weak' periphery.

From a structural point of view, therefore, the 'balance of power' period is a rather static phase ('equilibrium') between two dynamic phases marking successive steps in the construction of the political systems. Of course, specific political movements also took place within the period considered (cf. maps at the front of the book for an immediate visualization), but they did not affect the structural arrangement of the

area. It is during the static phase that the political conventions of the time, already evolving during the Middle Bronze period, were formalized in a more organic and sophisticated way – a way that we will try to recover through our analysis.

The state of the art

Whatever the interpretation of political relations in the Late Bronze age in a long-term perspective, it is a matter of fact that the attention of scholars has often focused on them, the impetus coming especially from the discovery of the archives at Amarna, Boghazköy and Ugarit. Apart from many analytical studies of texts and individual problems, some broader studies have been produced in the last 100 years, varying in subject and approach. Many of them have been of great help in approaching the data and singling out the problems for our analysis. Yet it must be said that the main directions of historical studies have been quite different from those characterizing my project.

Archaeological studies are of little use in the present study, which maintains an ‘ideological’ level of interpretation. Trade is the most obvious subject for placing inter-regional contacts to the fore but though proto-historical trade in particular has enjoyed the application of elaborate methodologies, trade in the Late Bronze period is still mostly analysed in purely factual terms of little or no relevance for the study of ideology.¹¹ Chronology is a privileged topic because of the many synchronisms linking the inner chronologies of the different regions in a unitary network, and it has stimulated many monographs.¹² The degree of consensus here (with deviations over a range of a dozen years) is quite enough for a study like our own, more concerned as it is with structure than events. The general schemes supplied in the chronologies at the end of the book are only meant to provide the (non-specialist) reader with locations in time for the different texts and persons named.

Many juridical studies, especially on the formal and legal aspects of international relations,¹³ have a much more direct relevance to the present monograph. However, jurists usually have a normative approach based on a compact and well-established methodology, while a comprehensive and nuanced historical understanding requires a more flexible approach using different methodologies. Extreme cases of methodological disagreement will be examined below.

From a properly historical point of view, some important monographs have been produced. These are mainly regional in extent¹⁴ but also deal especially with the problem of the connections between regions – the

Egypt–Asia relationship being the most studied.¹⁵ Much more difficult seems to be the attempt to achieve an overall historical account of the entire area, the outstanding reference work on the history of the ancient Near East, namely the revised edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, being the best illustration of this predicament. Detailed historical reconstruction seems to be incompatible with a treatment of general problems and unifying features – and even with a coherent treatment of single areas (Syria–Palestine in particular),¹⁶ which are fragmented into a plurality of contributions following the philological competence of the authors more than the historical reality.

Today we do not need to look for new perspectives or methods of analysis. Semiology and communication theory, economic and political anthropology, and many other disciplines are all a part of our common knowledge. Within these fields, specific techniques of analysis have been tested and improved, which – provided we are able to introduce the necessary adaptations – may be useful for a better understanding of the ancient Near East. We need simply to be aware and take advantage of the cultural trends peculiar to our own time. This means foremost to join an anthropological perspective to the historical one. History and anthropology are different, even opposite points of view, only in a short-term perspective. In the long run, it should be clear how similar they are in underlining the difference between us and the object of our study, in making us aware that the observer should not influence the observed phenomenon but should keep his own culture, his own system of values, his own ideology, apart from those under study – which otherwise run the risk of being completely misunderstood as distorted, or inferior, or anomalous instances of our culture, of our system of values, of our ideology.

Reciprocity and redistribution

In order to analyse inter-state relations in the ancient Near East at a first level of approximation, two of Karl Polanyi's 'patterns of integration' have been selected: reciprocity and redistribution.¹⁷ In their simplest definitions, 'reciprocity denotes movements between correlative points of symmetrical groupings; redistribution designates appropriational movements toward a center and out of it again ... Reciprocity, then, assumes for a background symmetrically arranged groupings; redistribution is dependent upon the presence of some measure of centrality in the group'.¹⁸ We can use these analytical tools without necessarily accepting many presuppositions and implications of Polanyi's own views (cf. the next

section below). This is because they signify quite general and elementary patterns, which as a result are suitable for the analysis (rather than description) of *any* situation; they are so general as to avoid the risk of establishing their hierarchy in relation to 'our' pattern.¹⁹ Furthermore, they are structural (or 'ideal') types, not evolutionary stages, thus again avoiding the risk of a sequence obviously culminating with our own system. The contrasting patterns of reciprocity and redistribution will be used here in order to analyse the same historical realities; an attempt will certainly not be made to force our data to fit one or another of them.

Of course, at the level of family and small group relations reciprocity and redistribution are evident in every historical (and pre-historical) period, back to the very beginnings of social organization. The household is a small redistributive organization, and its face-to-face relations follow the lines of reciprocity. It was only later that the two integrative patterns were transferred to the properly political level, and more specifically to the level of inter-state relations, according to the circumstances of the time. Yet the overlaps between the outlooks characteristic of both inter-state and family/household relations are so extensive in the ancient Near East (with its all-pervasive peasant culture) that terminology and symbolic behaviour always exhibit obvious traces of their origins.

The application of the redistributive pattern to inter-state relations goes back to the very beginning of our (written) sources, and presumably to the very origins of the states existing since the Uruk period, ca. 3500–3000 BC. It is strictly linked with the origin of the state organization as an expanded household, or 'great house(hold)',²⁰ if we want to keep the ancient terminology.²¹ It is best applied to a situation of basically isolated state formations that consider the outer world only as a function of themselves.

As for the appearance of the reciprocative pattern, this (though at least in principle as 'simple' and 'primitive' as the other one), seems to occur somewhat later, belonging to a period when the interactions between different states became so intensive as to require another view, one suggesting more flexibility than that displayed by the 'monocentric' household. The reciprocative view is then re-employed (in a metaphorical way) with reference to relations among states that basically maintain their inner redistributive organization.

It will thus be clear that the two patterns have a different tradition and a different resonance, redistribution being usually seen as more 'archaic' and reciprocity as more 'evolved'. Both were in any case already long in use by the Late Bronze age, though the reciprocative view is more relevant to this period than to those which came before or after it, when the absence of a

balance of power and the centrality of some states left little room for a multicentred 'symmetrical' understanding of political relationships.

The interpretive nature of the integrative patterns

The integrative patterns of redistribution and reciprocity were first proposed and are more properly applied to the circulation of goods. Their wider implications, however, make them suitable for a general understanding of all social and political relations, even when no displacement of goods takes place. In each of the three parts into which the present book is divided ('Territory and Borders', 'War and Alliance', 'Circulation of Goods'), the contrasting use of the two patterns has turned out to be of great heuristic value. The centralized vs. symmetrical arrangement of the circulation of goods corresponds in more general terms to a centralized vs. symmetrical view of political interaction as a whole. This implies that the two patterns of integration are here considered not as descriptive models of really different networks of exchange, but as interpretations, mental models, of a reality that in itself does not belong to any pattern.

It is in overlooking the ideological character of the integrative patterns that the 'orthodox' Polanyian approach is seriously at fault. In this approach these patterns exist in reality,²² with the result that exchanges take place according to one or another of them and it would be impossible to describe according to one pattern an exchange system built up according to another pattern. The 'reality' of Polanyi's patterns has been the source of many disagreements and misunderstandings, so some preliminary observations need to be made about it. In particular it must be noted that:

1. The reciprocity pattern brings about, in its optimal form, the existence of two or more peer-ranking partners. Now, parity in rank does not exist 'in reality': it does not exist at an objective level because two persons will always be different according to their place in society, their age, prestige, wealth, family and trading relationships, and so on. It does not even exist at a subjective level, each of the two partners viewing differently their respective ranks. Moreover, in a single act of exchange, a discrepancy in status is always introduced by fortuitous circumstances: the person who started the negotiation, the one who is more in need of concluding it, the result of the previous negotiation, and so on.²³

2. The reciprocity pattern also brings about an equivalence in exchanged goods, and this does not exist 'in reality' either. The two partners have different hierarchies of values, so that evaluation by the one is never coincident with that by the other. A third, 'objective' equivalence simply does not exist, the conventional one being the result of economic, political and other factors, and changing through time.

The reciprocity pattern thus really needs to be seen as involving two partners who, in order to preserve their mutually advantageous relationship, adopt the convention of at least pretending to consider each other as equals and of regarding their exchanged goods as equivalent, at any rate in the long run. In this way the pattern shifts from a description of real exchanges to an ideology of the actors involved in them. Under the ideology of reciprocity, quite unequal relations – extending even to the extreme case of 'colonial exploitation' – can be seen to exist.²⁴

3. The redistributive pattern underscores both the disparity in rank between the central agency and peripheral partners and the imbalance between centripetal and centrifugal contributions, the latter being in some cases completely missing.²⁵ So the 'real' situation can range from unidirectional contributions (forced by physical or ideological constraints, and with purely ideological returns), to a centralized arrangement of reciprocal (balanced or unbalanced) relations.²⁶ Now, the centralized pattern superimposed on a complex network of reciprocal relations is the point of view of the central partner, and the pattern is built by simply ignoring other relations in which he is not involved, or which do not agree with his centrality. But any 'peripheral' partner could similarly build a centralized network of his own. So at both ends of the possible range ideology plays an essential role, and the same act of exchange may be considered as a constitutive element both of a simple symmetrical relationship and a more complex centralized network.

To return to the main point, then, it should be clear that the two patterns – reciprocity and redistribution – are not descriptive models but *interpretations* of a unique reality. In other words, the adoption (first by the participants and secondly by outside observers) of one pattern or another is the result of an ideological decision, a selecting of only some elements as meaningful and a discarding of others as irrelevant or inconvenient.

So the very same episode, as we shall see, can be framed into both patterns at the same time. The two partners can view their relationship differently, as symmetrical according to one or centralized according to the other; or else the same person can describe the same exchange act as

reciprocative (when addressing his partner) and as redistributive (when addressing his inner audience); or else the evaluation of an exchange relationship can be more complex, including elements from both patterns together. The Brazilian village studied by Lévi-Strauss²⁷ was described by some inhabitants as a centralized structure, by others as a symmetrical structure, and the 'real' plan fits both descriptions and belongs to neither. Likewise the international political world of the Near East in the Late Bronze age is presented in some texts as a centralized one, in others as a network of symmetrically arranged relationships. The 'real world' is much more complicated and cannot be described for lack of quantitative data, but it certainly contained features of both patterns. An intelligent selection of the elements allowed the protagonists to describe reality in the way most appropriate to their cultural background and political aims.

Prestige and interest

The selection of an interpretive pattern by the political actors themselves is not arbitrary. In order to be plausible and effective, it must correspond as much as possible with the actual situation, and it must be deeply embedded in the traditional worldview of their country and their culture. In fact a country like Egypt, because of its geographical compactness and isolation in a surrounding 'void', well-established centralized worldview and real material superiority over its partners, makes prevalent use of the redistributive pattern. By contrast, the Asiatic kingdoms, whose borders are more open and fluctuating, whose balance of power is less stable in individual cases but basically well balanced in the long run, and whose exchanges are multi-directional in character, necessarily adopt a symmetrical view of political relations. Of course, this invites the objection that the suggestion of a contrasting analysis of the two integrative patterns is simply a suggestion for a study of the Egyptian vs. Asiatic worldviews.

The diachronic development of political relations must also be taken into account. Perhaps Ramesses II encourages interpretation in terms of the reciprocal pattern more than does Tuthmosis III simply because the former's military balance with the Hittites was rather even, while the latter's military balance with Mitanni was quite favourable. Does the growth into empires of both Hatti and Assyria explain the elements of centralization in their worldviews? And after all, could not the properly political dynamics explain most of the statements in the texts, without having recourse to ideology and semiology?

Now, the geopolitical factor is undeniable, already well known and frequently taken into account (usually as the only factor!); the diachronic

factor is also easily understood. Yet the most interesting differences, the truly conventional character in the use of the interpretive patterns, are revealed by contrasting texts of different typology but belonging to the same country and period. As in a laboratory experiment, we have to control some factors (here, time and space differences) in order to test the relevance of the factor under study. The result of such an 'experiment' is that the basic difference lies between two sets of documents, with the connected differences in addressees, in purposes and in character.

On the one hand we have documents addressed to the inner public. These texts range from inscriptions on royal monuments to those on private tombs but have in common a celebrative purpose, an underscoring of prestige, a centralized worldview and a disregard for the point of view of the outer partners. Thus the texts provide documentary proof or ostentatious evidence of the author's political and/or social position, whether the issue be the Pharaoh's ideological and administrative control of his kingdom or the social rank of a deceased official.

On the other hand we have documents addressed to the outer partners, and these constitute the operative substance of inter-state relations. These texts range from international treaties to letters exchanged between private persons, but have in common an integrative purpose, an underscoring of interest, a symmetrical worldview, and an interest in the point of view of the partner – the more so if the purpose is to modify or overwhelm it.

The two situations are, of course, interconnected. Great prestige with the inner public is necessary in order to negotiate from strength, and success in negotiations increases inner prestige. But we are dealing with two moments that are basically distinct and thus require a different perception and representation of reality. Our decoding of the texts belonging to the two different sets (and also to more specialized subsets with their own characteristics, of course) requires a constant concern for the main elements in communication theory: who is the sender, who is the addressee (including further, secondary, addressees), what is the medium of communication, for what purpose has the message been issued, what code is used and why, what do we know about previous contacts between the same partners, and so on. In considering these points we can distinguish what belongs to the level of ideology and what belongs to the level of reality, what is stereotyped convention and what is specific information.²⁸ Some historical information (too simplistically considered as such for lack of a correct analysis) should probably be discarded, but most of the information will be perceived in a deeper way, with all the pertinent nuances and connotations. Above all, the dynamics of the interacting systems can be reconstructed to a certain extent – the

limit being imposed by the uneven and scanty sample of data at our disposal.

The aim of reconstructing a system of values rather than a set of specific historical facts, the focus on structure more than on events, does not mean a lack of interest in history, in political history. After all, we have to know the code in order to understand the single messages; we have to reconstruct a 'grammar' in order to read a text. Likewise, we have first to deal with the overall political ideology if we want really to understand political events. But just as an unknown code is deciphered by decoding messages, and a grammar is reconstructed from analysing texts, so our structural analysis starts from single documents; and even if the purpose is not to rewrite here the political history of the Near East in the Late Bronze age, an attentive reader will find many pointers in this direction – although the structural arrangement of the subject matters makes it difficult to use this book as a handbook of political history.

Geographical and chronological limits

Having selected the Late Bronze period as particularly suitable for analysis (cf. the section on the regional system of the Late Bronze Age above), the limits in time and space were left somewhat free to fluctuate, being basically imposed by the documentation itself. As concerns space, the bulk of data comes from (or refers to) Egypt, Syria-Palestine, Central/Eastern Anatolia and Upper Mesopotamia. A country that was a major element in the system, namely Babylonia, is rather under-represented here simply because the data coming from it is of little use from our point of view. It would have been useful to enlarge the picture to include the Mycenaean world on one side and Elam on the other, but the documents coming from these areas are even less appropriate to the kind of analysis we are carrying on. As for the area beyond – the Mediterranean, East Africa, Arabia and Iran – this is 'prehistoric' at the time, no written evidence having come from there. The spatial borders are thus those of the written evidence endowed with an ideological value, but this kind of delimitation is not artificial. It is inconceivable that the archaeological sample is so distorted as to miss completely an area that was interacting with the central core of the system at the same level and through the same procedures. The distribution of royal inscriptions, letters and treaties follows the distribution of the interacting political centres. And the very availability of writing is limited to and distinctive of the countries that had reached the technological and organizational level to be accepted as partners in the regional system.

The same kind of practical (but historically sound) considerations apply to the time limits. The beginning and end of the Late Bronze age are marked by two 'dark ages' during which the amount of available documents diminishes considerably, and in some areas disappears altogether.²⁹ This is especially true for the end of the period, the troubles in the early twelfth century bringing about a complete absence of written documents in Anatolia, Syria and Palestine. The better-protected states of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia kept their scribal and organizational levels but their involvement in international contacts declined as well. As a result, the final limit (ca. 1180 BC) is quite obvious, though use has been made of documents from the subsequent decades in Egypt (Wen-Amun) and Assyria (Tiglat-pileser I) when this was helpful in showing the mixture of persistence and innovation in the political procedures and ideologies of the most conservative centres.

The problem of the upper limits is more complex: just as the archaeological transition from Middle to Late Bronze is more conventional than substantial, so the inter-regional system functioning from the fifteenth to the thirteenth centuries was already well advanced in the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this case, some major political events are available: in Egypt the beginning of the eighteenth dynasty (ca. 1580 BC) also means the beginning of the Egyptian expansion into Asia. In Upper and Lower Mesopotamia the constitution of the Mitanni and Kassite kingdoms (ca. 1600 BC) provides an obvious starting point. In this case, too, use was made of data from the formative period, if particularly interesting. But the period under proper analysis lasts for four centuries, from the early sixteenth to the early twelfth century BC.

A third delimitation of our database is political in character. All of the documents belong to the political elites, and most of them to the royal palaces. This means that the political ideology they reflect is the ideology of the ruling class. Two problems should be discussed in this connection, but given the tremendous discrepancy between the limited data and the extensive space for speculation and hypotheses, I will confine myself to a few uncontroversial statements.

The first problem is that of the addressees of royal propaganda. Since only scribes could read the texts and some were not even visible, it seems that the audience was never more than a few people – which makes it difficult to call it 'propaganda' at all.³⁰ In fact it is all a matter of degree, and it seems clear that there is an inverse relationship between detail and the spread of the political ideologies. The most technical, detailed and complex texts were directed to palace circles, mostly scribes and high officials: only they had access to them and understood their implications; only they were

professionally interested in them; and the king needed to keep them convinced and supportive of the official ideology. In short, the authors and addressees of the political texts were virtually one and the same, and this is quite normal in every historical period. But there were more channels for a wider diffusion of political ideologies throughout the country: verbal, visual, and ceremonial channels, with even architecture playing a role. Of course, the richness of the political ideology is reduced by using vehicles such as these, but so is the need for ideological training when moving from royal palace to capital city, and thence to peripheral cities and provinces, to small villages in the countryside, to pastoral camps in the steppes or in the highlands. So the texts that we have were not accessible to the whole population, but a sufficient reflection of them reached everybody according to his cultural level and political involvement.

The second problem is that of a differentiation in ideology according to socio-political stratification. Almost nothing is known about the political ideologies (and worldview in general) shared by the lower classes, at least in the period here considered, and the little we do know is always filtered through the texts of the ruling elites. The most general elements of the ruling ideology – especially on the topic of relations with foreigners and the outer world – seem to have been basically common to all social and political layers, while more particular aspects were selected according to the interests, needs, feelings and special traditions of the different groups and classes. At all events, our treatment is unavoidably limited to the political ideologies of the ruling elites.

A last qualification, more practical in character, is also necessary. The treatment here is not meant to be comprehensive in its coverage of the international relations of the ancient Near East, or intended to make use of all existing documents which bear on this subject. It is selective in its approach, with some general and some very specific analysis, and particularly detailed discussion of some texts and terms having special relevance for our assumptions. Every single paragraph of this book, if treated on a fully documented basis and at a deeper analytical level, could become a monograph in its own right. This is of course neither feasible nor even desirable: I want simply to emphasize that the present work does not exhaust its topic but instead, hopefully, suggests a new direction in historical studies on the Late Bronze period. The uneven treatment of the subject, dictated by the uneven availability of the data and the uneven reflection of the political world in that data, makes this essay a rather personal perspective on a topic that ‘in reality’ should have been much more complex and contradictory.

Part I

Territory and Borders

1

Inner vs. Outer Territory

The notion of a homogeneous, qualitatively indifferent space, viewed as the geometrical locus of reciprocal positioning among objects, which in consequence is unchanging from any point of observation, is an abstraction which is appropriate only to particular fields of analysis. In political activity, and more generally in human relations, however, space – or territory – has hardly ever been viewed as homogeneous. This is so today because, while we are ‘Euclidean’ and rational beings when dealing with problems of geometry or physics, we are not when facing other persons or other political communities. This was even more true in the period which is the subject of this study, when ideas and symbols in official texts found a free application that in modern political documents tends to be less obvious – partly hidden by rewriting in the terms of hegemonic rational thought.¹

Qualitative differentiation in territorial perception is based on obvious psychological impressions, basically centred on the quest for security. The most influential approach in the past stemmed from theorizing about ‘mythical’ (or even ‘primitive’) thought,² which also found its way into studies of the ancient Near East.³ The prejudice to be removed is that all this applies only to the ‘primitive’ and ‘archaic’ mind, while ‘our’ thought is normal and rational – a pretty mythical idea in its turn.⁴ Once this prejudice is eliminated, the studies of mythical thought retain a great deal of heuristic value and are still commonly employed in the phenomenology of religion and related fields.⁵ We do not need to analyse here the psychological roots of the differentiated appreciation of space. Suffice it to state that they find a concrete application in preferring the known to the unknown, the light to the dark, the enclosed to the open, the solid to the weak, the compact to the scattered, the fixed to the moving, the familiar to the unfamiliar, and so on. The concentration of all the positive qualities

in the above alternatives makes up (at its best) the area where the subject is, all the negative qualities being pushed toward the periphery. It is not only and not so much a question of practical behaviour, but also and even more a question of symbolic representation of reality, a system of values.

The opposition between centre and periphery can be perceived at different levels and influences social organization to a greater or lesser extent.⁶ There is the personal (house or family) level of relationships; the local (community or settlement) level, encompassing the people and places with whom we are accustomed to deal in daily life; and the larger application to the national or cultural unit. People sharing language and values, customs and procedures, who are inserted into the same administrative, economic and political system, are led to view their own territory as different from the surrounding areas. This difference can appear even in terminology: for example, in Sumerian the inner country is *kalam* and the surrounding lands/mountains are *kur.kur*,⁷ in Egyptian the flat Nile valley is *t'* while the surrounding mountains are *h'swt*, and the black agricultural land is *kmt* while the red outer steppe is *dšrt*.⁸ A similar juxtaposition between 'our' population and foreign peoples seems to be a development of the first millennium,⁹ not yet to be found in the territorial (as opposed to national) states of the Bronze age.¹⁰

Now, the clear-cut opposition between inner and outer land may in some cases have been influenced and made easier by topographical and ecological factors – which in fact influenced the very constitution of some political units, as well as the establishment of cultural and linguistic frontiers. The most obvious case is Egypt, where the differences between the fertile and irrigated valley and the arid steppe or desert, between the intensively populated countryside and the surrounding 'empty' space, are quite impressive. Egypt is also a rather closed area, with only a few 'gateways' linking it to other (but looser and distant) areas of intensive settlement.

Mesopotamia is somewhat different, bordering on desert to the south-west and mountains to the north-east, but much more open to contacts with the surrounding areas. It is also endowed with a greater internal complexity and mobility of social and ecological borders.¹¹ Other countries (Anatolia, Syria-Palestine and Iran) have still fewer compelling geographical reasons to consider themselves well defined and qualitatively different from their neighbours – yet they also developed a centralist view and a diversified cultural appreciation of space.

In effect, we have to take into due account the uneven spread of settlement in the Near East in the Late Bronze age.¹² People (especially those enjoying city life and state organization) were concentrated in relatively limited areas, ranging from the large alluvial plains of Egypt and

Lower Mesopotamia to quite small enclaves in the highlands, separated from one another by steppe or woodland or mountains inhabited by a sparse population – if any at all – of lower technological and organizational development. Consequently, contacts with and even knowledge of what was beyond the ecological and political borders were rather difficult, and did not belong to the daily experience of the common people.

This tendency to isolation was effective in keeping alive a ‘nuclear’ or ‘centralist’ perception of territorial relations, a perception which will fade away only if more contacts with the outer world become frequent enough; and an experience of different peoples makes it clear that this diversity is cultural rather than natural, quantitative rather than qualitative. In other words, the ecological barriers are not the reason for the differentiated appreciation of geographical space (which springs from basic psychological features), but are a factor in its organization and reinforcement into cultural (and eventually ‘national’) stereotypes.

The geographical elements and cultural characteristics of the inhabitants of the peripheral world are considered not only different but inferior to those in the central country. If the periphery is a desert, it is the seat of death and emptiness (even the image of the netherworld);¹³ if it is a woodland, it is the seat of darkness; and if it is a highland, it is difficult of access. Its economic resources (see Chapter 21) are limited and insufficient for human life: they acquire a reasonable value only as a function of the complex and substantial needs of the central country. The culture of the foreigners is viewed either as lacking the basic requirements of the civilized world (as in the Mesopotamian stereotypes of the nomads who ‘do not know/have house/city/grain/etc.’),¹⁴ or else as being the very reverse of ours. In a Ramesside royal hymn, the Asiatics are ‘those who plough in summer and reap in winter’.¹⁵ Among the many topics suitable for analysis, we will select here just two of them: language as a qualifying item of culture, and water as an essential for life.

In the scribal milieu of the Ramesside period the training of children, foreigners and animals is unified and contrasted to the culture of the male, adult, educated Egyptian. The Instructions of Any, a wisdom text that goes back to the late eighteenth dynasty, provide the most detailed picture:

The savage lion abandons his wrath, and comes to resemble the timid donkey. The horse slips into his harness, obedient it goes outdoors. The dog obeys the word, and walks behind its master. The monkey carries the stick, though its mother did not carry it. The goose returns from the pond, when one comes to shut it in the yard. One teaches the Nubian to speak Egyptian, the Syrian and other strangers too.¹⁶

The same perspective is reflected in the scribal miscellanies: 'The ape understands words, yet it is brought from Kush.'¹⁷ The difficulty for an ape to speak 'Egyptian' (but remember that 'Egyptian language' [*ns n rmt*] is literally 'the language of men')¹⁸ derives not from its being an animal, but from its being from Kush. We have to presume that apes normally understand, and perhaps speak, the language of Kush. Animals and foreigners alike can learn Egyptian, but their original language is physically different, their tongue/language is 'inverted' in comparison to the 'human/Egyptian' one:

Having been brought into Egypt, (the Libyans) were settled into fortresses ... They heard, while in the service of the king, the Egyptian language, and the king let them forget their own language, he overturned their tongues.¹⁹

Also in Asia we can trace the idea that foreign languages are objectively ununderstandable, and rather similar to animal (especially bird) calls. But wherever bi- and multilingualism become a common experience, the different languages are evaluated to the same level, there is 'correspondence' (*mithurtu* is the technical term) between them,²⁰ which finds expression in the arrangement of bi- and multilingual vocabularies,²¹ in inter-linear translations,²² in the widespread use of interpreters.²³

The case of water is somewhat similar. If a foreign river, comparable in size to the Nile (e.g. the Euphrates), is ever encountered, it is classed as 'inverted water' (*mw qd*) because it flows the wrong way.²⁴ But generally foreign countries are assumed to lack rivers, relying instead on rainfall for their agricultural needs – a rather inferior and unreliable substitute:

You made the Nile in the underworld, you bring him when you will, to nourish the people, for you made them for yourself ... All distant lands, you make them live, you made a heavenly Nile descend for them: he makes waves on the mountains like the sea, to drench their fields and their towns. How excellent are your ways, O Lord of eternity! A Nile from heaven for foreign peoples, and for all lands' creatures that walk on legs; for Egypt the Nile who comes from the underworld.²⁵

This is the Aton hymn of Amenophis IV, an unusual attempt at a universalistic and balanced vision of the world in which all enjoy the benefits of a universal god, yet the Egypt-centred evaluation remains an all-pervading feature.

Of course the inner country too can be considered at different levels, from the mythical to the technical. In the case of Egypt, the mythical idea is centred on the 'union of Both Lands' (*sm' t'wy*), a political myth quite central in pharaonic ideology.²⁶ Texts of a more realistic kind range from those providing a theoretical/generalizing calculation of the extent of the country,²⁷ to those containing a quite technical/administrative knowledge of its partition into large (temple or palace) estates and single fields, as in the extensive survey of the Wilbour Papyrus.²⁸

The same range of possibilities applies to foreign lands: from a mythical and stereotyped list of the 'Nine Bows',²⁹ to the technical tool of the 'Itinerary'³⁰ – like the one that found its way into the Annals of Tuthmosis III,³¹ or the one that can be reconstructed from the Anastasi I letter.³² By rearranging the information contained in this text, we can also reconstruct a differentiated appreciation of Syria as viewed by the Egyptian messengers and officials travelling through it. Some places under Egyptian administrative control, like Jaffa, are quite safe (apart from thefts and minor problems with the inhabitants) and quite efficient (the chariot can be repaired by local craftsmen). Other sites, like Tyre and Byblos, are somewhat strange but at least urban and civilized. But the space between them is quite hostile: the physical difficulties (mountains and rivers to be crossed, bad roads, forests) are increased by the presence of wild animals, including men who are also wild and ferocious.³³ Civilized control on the chaotic periphery is difficult, the territory is so large and different, at the same time empty and filled with dangers, everything moving, everything hidden or in the dark. The general feeling is one of insecurity.

Hittite control on the Kashka territory is not too different from Egyptian control in Syria-Palestine. The Instructions for the *bēl madgalti*³⁴ (the chief of the garrison in a watchtower) can be analysed in a similar way. There is a closed and well protected space: the *madgaltu* itself, the fortified castle of the garrison, and inside this space everything must be run with a care and an exactitude so obsessive as to reveal a good deal of anxiety. Every year the walls are to be plastered, the drain channels cleaned and the locks verified; beams and planks must be of exact dimensions (cubits and fingers are given); and so on. The greatest care is devoted to keeping watch from the walls and opening and locking the doors of the castle – the most critical element, giving access to the outer world (and vice versa!) which is not under firm control.³⁵ Beyond the walls, where robberies and various kinds of crime take place, the Hittite garrison has to proceed with the utmost caution: scouts go ahead of the troops, who must not pursue enemy forces for more than three days; the garrison chief must not be

absent for more than two. Beyond a day's walk security is believed to disappear.³⁶

Between the closed and fortified castle and the dangerous and unknown territory, there is an intermediate belt: the local villages, inhabited by foreigners and deportees, themselves foreign in nature. In the villages Hittite control must be enforced and civilization established. These tasks must be accomplished in a cautious way, always in tune with the wishes of the local authorities, and showing maximum concern for two matters especially close to the needs and values of the local population: the restoration of temples and cultic furniture, priestly personnel and feasts, and the administration of justice:

As it has been from olden times, in a town in which they have been accustomed to imposing the death penalty, they shall continue to do so. But in a town where they have been accustomed to imposing exile, they shall continue that (custom).³⁷

So 'ethnologically minded' and so capable of appreciating cultural diversities when dealing with peripheral peoples,³⁸ and trying to enlarge their cosmos at the expense of the chaos surrounding it, the Hittites become much more ruthless and 'centre-minded' when some strange custom from the barbarian periphery challenges the inner country and even the royal palace. In this event – as shown unmistakably by the norms applying to the marriage of a Hittite princess to the 'barbarian' chief of the Hayasha – deviance becomes a crime.³⁹

2

Universal Control

The use of royal titles and epithets hinting at universal control of the world is well known in every period of ancient Near Eastern history, and not least in the Late Bronze age. The interesting problem is logical and classificatory: how were the ancient scribes able to express totality, and consequently total control? The easiest way is to assert authority over a world viewed as an undifferentiated unit. A classical example of this is the Akkadian title *šar kiššati* ('king of the universe'), which in our period is assumed by the Kassite kings (from Kurigalzu I on) in its properly abstract meaning,¹ and by the Assyrian kings (from Ashur-uballit I to Tiglat-pileser I),² and as a reaction also by the Hittite king Tudhaliya IV,³ probably with a more precise allusion to the control of Upper Mesopotamia. Another way is to assert control over a totality, or whole, viewed as united but not unitary, homogeneous but not compact, as implied by the Akkadian title *šar / bēl kiššat niše* 'king / lord of the whole people'⁴ or by the Egyptian title *nb n ḥꜥswt nbt* 'lord of all lands'.⁵

But more often the totality is viewed as being structured, that is subdivided into different parts. This underlines the spatial relations to the central country, so confirming its position as pivot of the world. First of all, the whole can be structured by contrasting the inner country and the periphery (e.g. *ḥqꜥ kmt dšrt* 'king of agricultural land and steppe-land', or the like).⁶ A second possibility is a twofold designation of the centre and/or the periphery separately considered. The best known bipartite division of the inner country is the Egyptian idea of an *oikumene* obtained by joining two complementary halves, equal in value, as reflected in the most common royal titles *nswt bit* 'king of Upper and Lower Egypt', and *nb tꜥwy* 'lord of both lands'.⁷ In this case the assertion of universal control only makes reference to the inner country, but is implicitly projected onto the entire world. The implications in the Babylonian title 'king of Sumer and

Akkad' are less cosmological in nature, yet the logical procedure is the same.⁸

The twofold division can refer to the outer countries as well: Egyptian kings proclaim their control over northern and southern lands alike,⁹ and Mesopotamian kings proclaim their control from the lower to the upper sea.¹⁰ In both cases, the axis selected for the most effective contrast is not a casual one; it is the natural, basic axis provided by the main rivers. In Egypt it is supplied by the south–north flow of the Nile (all the better because it intersects the east–west path of the sun), and in Mesopotamia by the Euphrates and the Tigris, which flow to the 'Lower Sea' (the Persian Gulf) from the highlands behind which the 'Upper Sea' (the Mediterranean) is to be found.

Lastly, the twofold division can be of the typological sort, applied to the whole world: 'king of mountains and large plains', or simply 'up and down'.¹¹ In any case the idea remains evident that the union of opposites makes up a totality – an idea also operative at a stylistic level in various languages of the ancient Near East.¹²

Equally frequent is partition according to the points of the compass, the basic reference points of man's physical orientation: 'beyond', 'behind', 'to the right' and 'to the left' of the observer.¹³ This fourfold partition of the periphery implicitly draws attention to the presence of the inner, pivotal country at the intersection of the four quarters.¹⁴ In the Late Bronze age the Mesopotamian title *šar kibrāt arba'im* 'king of the four quarters' is already a centuries-old and quite stereotyped expression of such an idea.¹⁵ In Egypt the same notion is expressed mostly through analytical lists in which pharaonic authority is asserted over four lands that acquire meaningful roles by virtue of their location at the four points of the compass:

My southern boundary is as far as the land of Punt ...

My eastern boundary is as far as the marshes of Asia ...

My western boundary is as far as the mountain of Manu ...

My northern boundary is as far as [xxx] ...¹⁶

Otherwise, the possibility is left of an 'open' list, where single items, as numerous as possible, are accumulated to give the impression of a totality over which control is claimed – or at least of a tendency in that direction. The endless listings of subdued countries on the Egyptian temple reliefs in the New Kingdom,¹⁷ and the numbering (apparently the result of precise administrative recording) of conquered cities, killed enemies or items of booty and tribute, so common both in Egypt and Asia, try to convey such

an impression. The 'open listing' presentation is certainly less rigorous than the two- or fourfold structures as a means of demonstrating control over the whole world:¹⁸ however long the list, one more item could always be added (or at least imagined), one more city always left unconquered. But, although less conclusive, these long lists are more impressive, more useful for propaganda purposes. Moreover, an open list may also be arranged according to a structural pattern (e.g. by opposing southern and northern sites) in order to show that the listed items are not only great in number but distributed in a way that covers the whole world.

Now, what relationship exists between a purely theoretical control of the world and political reality? As a matter of fact, in a worldview based on qualitative differentiation and an imbalance in rank between centre and periphery, the only 'correct' political solution is universal empire. Implicitly, such an empire has existed from the beginning: the central country has a privileged relationship with the creator and organizer god(s) and is the seat of the only king operating as a link between gods and men; this ruler is the only one entrusted with the task of keeping the cosmological activity of the gods in good order. All the world must submit to the political authority of the central sovereign, no room being left for rival powers or those sharing the same burden.

Equating the political reality to these cosmological concepts is more a mental than a physical activity: knowledge is more important than action. The centralist ideology is a super-structural pattern in relation to the inner audience, in relation to its control by the king. It is not so important truly to control the world as to persuade the inner population that we do so. A real – political, fiscal, administrative and judicial – control of a barbaric and underdeveloped periphery is not even rewarding; what matters is the king's prestige in the central kingdom. In this perspective, the practical realization of the imperialistic ideology has an exemplary, paradigmatic value: it is a demonstration that the king is able to subdue foreign countries, obtain foreign tribute and exterminate foreign peoples whenever he desires. The actualization of control is an exercise of will that it would be pedantic to apply to every possible object but must at least be conclusively exemplified.

Moreover, the king has at his disposal instruments of propaganda which enable him to 'materialize' his success in front of the inner population: ceremonial parades, monumental reliefs, rituals and feasts. This royal exhibition is the only opportunity which the population has to obtain knowledge of the outer world; it is simply ignored until the king 'conquers' it and reveals his achievement.

Royal titles are a part of this demonstrative materialization of success. Some contain the 'programme' of the reign, the paradigmatic qualities of the king. As a result, they are assumed at the beginning of the reign, and the king is careful to demonstrate as soon as possible that he is deserving of the more specific among them: in the case of 'imperialistic' ones, by leading a successful campaign abroad.¹⁹ However, other titles, especially the more concrete and those most suggestive of geopolitical reality, cannot be assumed without justification: titles have to be earned.²⁰ The 'truth' of very general and vague titles ('king of the universe') can be neither verified nor falsified, but for more specific titles the confrontation with political reality is a problem, and the subject for interesting analysis.

We will limit ourselves to one example: the title *šar tâmti elīti u šupalīti* 'king of the Upper and Lower Sea', which was assumed by Tukulti-Ninurta I.²¹ The title is new for Assyria and could not have been assumed without a demonstrative act, a justification. As a matter of fact, Assyria does not border on any sea, and Tukulti-Ninurta never reached the Mediterranean or the Persian Gulf. However, he subdued Babylon for a short period, and it is clear that this allowed Tukulti-Ninurta to use the title. In fact, it is used first in connection with the victory over Babylon and eventually disappears when the territorial gains which this produced are relinquished and the Kassites recover their autonomy.

By arranging the inscriptions of the Assyrian king in chronological order, we can follow in detail the connection between titles and military accomplishments.²² In the first phase (before the Babylonian conquest) the title 'king of the Upper and Lower Sea' is never used, but in the northern sector the reaching of an 'Upper Sea' is proudly proclaimed which the context makes clear to be the Van Lake. This is rather bold since the lake in question is certainly 'Upper' but hardly a 'Sea' (the opposite shore is in sight and can easily be reached). However, the Assyrian statement is significant because it reveals that the king already had in mind the problem of the two seas to be reached in order to substantiate his pretensions to universal dominion.

In the second phase (inscriptions celebrating the conquest of Babylon, but still ignoring the building of the new capital at Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta), the reaching of the Upper Sea is omitted as an explicit and separate statement because already taken for granted. The victory over the Kassites is celebrated by assuming the titles 'king of Karduniash' and 'king of Sumer and Akkad' in addition to the title of 'king of the Upper and Lower Sea'. Such a title is supported by the statement that the Assyrian border reaches the shore of the Persian Gulf. For the time being, the universalistic ambition seems to be adequately satisfied.

In the third phase (inscriptions celebrating the building of the new capital city) the title 'king of the Upper and Lower Sea' is still kept, but some problems appear. Assyrian control of Babylonia is weakening. Once Tukulti-Ninurta had returned to Assyria, after one year of personally acting as king of Babylon, his governors left on the spot faced opposition from three Kassite kings – in rapid succession – over an eight-year period. During this phase, Tukulti-Ninurta decided to keep the titles of 'king of Karduniash' and 'king of Sumer and Akkad', but added two more. 'King of Sippar and Babylon' seems a realistic description of his domain (southern Babylonia being already lost), while 'king of Dilmun and Meluhha' can but hint at trade with Bahrein and the Indus valley, and tries to compensate for a real retreat by an ideological advance. In this third phase, the Assyrian border on the shore of the Gulf is no longer mentioned.

At the same time, the problem of the Hittites becomes paramount on the western front – the border between Assyria and Hatti being located on the river Euphrates. Now that Assyrian public opinion is attentive to the Hittite problem, the pretension to dominate as far as the Upper Sea is contradicted by the evident fact that the Hatti lands are interposed between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. In the third phase, therefore, the statement appears that since the first year of his reign Tukulti-Ninurta deported 28 800 Hittites 'from beyond the Euphrates'. Such a statement has been explained in various ways. It has been suggested that the Assyrian king delayed the celebration of his victory in order not to worsen his relations with Hatti.²³ Such an explanation is absurd: so sensational a victory had already produced a relationship which could not have been worse than it already was. It has also been suggested that the crossing of the Euphrates (with the subsequent victory over and deportation of the Hittites) took place in a later period, but was inscribed in the first year in order to emphasize its relevance.²⁴ This explanation is also absurd: a real defeat of the Hittites and their mass deportation would have been the subject of a special (and quite triumphalistic) paragraph, it would not have been grouped together with the first-year campaigns in the Nairi highlands.

The correct interpretation is quite different: there was no victory over the Hittites at all, either in the first year or later. But in the anti-Hittite climate during the war, while the real front remained stalemated on the Euphrates, an old episode in the first campaign was re-used in order to provide a victory to celebrate. During the first year of the campaign, the main tributary of the Euphrates, the Murat-Su, had been crossed and many prisoners had been taken. The raid did not enter the territory of the

Hittite empire, yet in the Assyrian 'mental map' any land beyond the Euphrates is 'Hatti land', and its inhabitants can be defined as 'Hittites' with only a slight disregard for logic. In fact, the famous 28 800 deportees were not Hittite in the proper political sense at all: they belonged to those tribes in the Upper Euphrates catchment area that Tukulti-Ninurta lists in detail. The 'anti-Hittite' reading of an old event serves to support the warlike mobilization of Assyria and the ideological ambition to dominate as far as the Upper Sea (in the sense of the Mediterranean). Deporting the Hittites in fact demonstrates Assyrian control over that land (Hatti) which is interposed between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean – in exactly the same terms as the victory over Babylon demonstrates Assyrian control over the territory between Assyria and the Persian Gulf.

This celebrative effort is dismissed in the fourth phase, when the title 'king of the Upper and Lower sea' is abandoned. The border represented by the Euphrates had turned out to be impassable and control over Babylon was lost. The title 'king of Sumer and Akkad' is also abandoned, and the territorial gains of the Babylonian victory are no longer mentioned. What remains is just the memory of a big battle won and an enemy king captured. Universalistic ambitions are for the moment set aside, to be revived by Tiglat-pileser I roughly 150 years later.

The relationship between political reality and ideological statements may be more or less satisfactory, but some kind of justification remains necessary. The titles are not empty boasts, for the public – at least the inner circle of palace officials – knows the situation, needs justifications and is attentive to changes.

3

The Boundaries of the World

Shifting the focus from content to container, the definition of a controlled area becomes a definition of boundaries: the universal empire is a state whose political borders are identical with the borders of the world. Yet the very concept of 'border' or 'boundary' is rather complex, in ancient and modern ideologies alike. In texts of the Late Bronze period, some fundamental opposites can be pointed out: on the one hand, linear vs. zonal, fixed vs. moving or static vs. dynamic; on the other, one-sided vs. reciprocal. These result in various concepts of border that are more appropriate to either the centralist or reciprocative worldviews respectively. Conceptual differentiation found its counterpart in a lexical differentiation (even if hardly consistent in itself and with 'our' terminology and conceptual frame). In particular, the Egyptian terminology of border is centred on two terms whose diversity has been properly emphasized: *tš* is a real (political), flexible, movable border, while *drw* is a mythical and fixed border 'belonging to the structure of cosmos'.¹

In the centralist ideology of the Late Bronze period, we may distinguish two conceptions of border, the one static and the other dynamic in nature. According to the static conception, the border of the universal empire lies fixed in its optimal position, as an ideal and cosmic border unaffected by historical accidents. Located at the extreme end of a world that is limited yet quite large, it remains outside the practical experience and knowledge of the common people. It is thus linked to cosmic rather than topographical features, and is connected with the basic antitheses fixed/moving, light/dark, solid/fluid that we have already mentioned above (Chapter 1) as differentiating cosmos from chaos.

The horizon, considered not as a relative perception of space but as the concrete circumference whose diameter is daily travelled by the sun, is the most suitable feature for the purpose of defining a statically conceived

boundary.² For example, Tuthmosis I claims to have 'made the boundaries of Egypt as far as that which the sun encircles',³ while Hatshepsut is told that the gods 'shall set her boundaries as far as the breadth of heaven, as far as the limits of the twelfth hour of the night'.⁴ The expression 'what the sun encircles' is also quite frequent as a definition of the pharaonic domains,⁵ and in Assyria and Babylonia the expression 'from sunrise to sunset' has similar value and use.⁶

In Egypt, the end of the world may also be symbolized by four pillars sustaining the sky; they are obviously located at the horizon, where the sky (viewed as a solid hemisphere) joins the earth. In the 'Poetic Stela' of Tuthmosis III, we read 'I have set ... your terror as far as the four pillars of heaven',⁷ and in a text of Sethos I we read: 'He has extended the boundaries of Egypt as far as the heavens on every side.'⁸ These examples could easily be increased.

Just as widespread as the symbol of the pillars is the conviction that the earth ends on the circuit of the Ocean. Typical in this connection is the statement of Amenophis II: 'He (= Amun) assigned to me that which is with him, which the eye of his uraeus illuminates, all lands, all countries, every circuit, the Great Circle [= the Ocean]'.⁹ The Ocean, by its very name as *šnt wr* 'the great circle' (or 'the great encircler'), plays the same role relative to the perimeter as the sun does relative to the diameter. The actual identification of the Ocean (or parts of it) with the known seas (the Mediterranean and the Red Sea) is satisfactory only in part. In some directions (west and south) no sea was ever reached, while expansion into the Asiatic lands opened unlimited spaces, until a great river (the Euphrates) was found as an adequate substitute or representative of the Ocean (cf. below, Chapter 4).

The geographical situation of Mesopotamia produced a different yet comparable result. It was probably assumed that the Ocean encircled all of the lands, but in fact it was met only in two precise areas at opposite corners of the world: beyond the mouth of the Euphrates as the 'Lower Sea' (the Persian Gulf), and beyond the mountains of the upper Euphrates valley as the 'Upper Sea' (the Mediterranean). These are the points where the Ocean comes closest to the central land, thus becoming an actual, well-known, geographical reality. On the northern side of the Mesopotamian alluvium, every time that some large lake was reached, it was considered a representative of the 'Upper Sea'; this is already the case with the Van Lake in the middle Assyrian period (see Chapter 2), and will eventually be the case with the Urmia Lake and the Caspian Sea as well.¹⁰ On the other side, beyond the Syro-Arabian deserts, no sea was ever reached by Mesopotamian kings and armies, but the application of the old

geographical term Meluhha both to an area in the Persian Gulf (probably the Indus valley)¹¹ and to Nubia¹² is a hint of the notion of an 'Oceanic' continuity between the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

As to the other countries of Asia, the Hittites, at the centre of the Anatolian peninsula, could use the sea as both an ideal and practical border: reaching the Black Sea to the north and the Mediterranean to the south gives a feeling of completeness.¹³ In Syria-Palestine, the idea of an encircling Ocean (or better a double encircling watercourse) is attested at the mythical level.¹⁴ In 'actual' geography, the sea is obviously the western border, but rivers have to provide the other borders. In texts of different periods, the Jordan may be considered as the eastern boundary of Canaan (even if this means renunciation of Transjordan), while with a great deal of exaggeration the Euphrates becomes the ideal northern boundary of the Davidic/Solomonic kingdom. As for the southern boundary, the 'Brook of Egypt' – a wadi empty of water for most of the year and hardly representative of Oceanic waters – is promoted to this role.¹⁵

In Egypt, geographical reality made it almost inevitable that the northern border would be especially linked with the idea of water, whether the reference is to the Mediterranean sea or the 'marshes' that had once been those of the Delta but were eventually identified with other marshes more and more to the north, in Asia, following the enlargement of military activity and geographical knowledge.¹⁶ By contrast, the southern border is linked more with the wind. Consequently, the definition by Sethos I is quite typical: 'his southern boundary is as far as the wind, his northern boundary is as far as the sea.'¹⁷ Compared with the solid and stable earth, water and wind are fluid and movable elements and thus excellent representatives of the chaotic periphery.

In the single texts, more features and different views of the farthest border may be piled up – a maximum of vagueness being in any case the general effect:

Great Circle, the sea, the southern countries of the land of the Negro, as far as the marsh lands, as far as the limits of darkness, even to the four pillars of heavens.¹⁸

Beyond the last lands there is in any case water (be it the Ocean or the marshes or an encircling river), a fluid element, and the atmosphere also becomes fluid (the wind). Moreover, beyond the reach of the sun the darkness begins: an endless night.¹⁹ The space beyond the world's boundaries is thus endowed with chaotic features (endless, dark, fluid,

moving), as was the inner world before the ordering action of the creator god.²⁰ In this external space, the political and cultural order suitably entrusted to the king cannot be established, since not even the physical order – for which the god is responsible – has (yet) been realized. The king can and must extend his control only within these extreme boundaries.

At this point, the 'dynamic' conception of the boundary becomes pertinent: the king moves his border, only and always forward, thus enlarging the territory subject to his power and to the beneficial effect of his order.²¹ The boast along with the programme of 'enlarging the borders' occurs constantly in Assyrian titles²² and Egyptian phraseology.²³ For every king, the enlargement of the borders beyond those he inherited is a step towards achieving the world organization, and the king who completes this task will be duly ranked with the gods and heroes who started the process. The enlargement of the political border up to the optimal, cosmic boundary of the world produces in the last analysis the elimination of the inner borders of the world and the elimination of any difference between centre and periphery. It is an action of enlargement of order and peace at the expense of disorder and trouble, a fulfilment of creation and world organization.

Besides viewing this process as a moving of borders, it is possible to view it as an equalization of inner and outer territory. In defining in two parallel passages the aims of pharaonic expeditions, the inscription of Ahmose son of Abana uses the two following phrases: 'in order to extend the borders of Egypt' / 'in order to cast out violence in the highlands'.²⁴ And the Middle-Assyrian ritual similarly defines the programme of kingship in the two parallel phrases: 'By your right scepter enlarge your land! / May Assur give you authority and obedience, justice and peace!'²⁵ The border thus moved forward by the king is not simply a state border, it is the demarcation between order and chaos, peace and turbulence, justice and violence.

This dynamic border is always in the process of realization, but obviously never completed. Some contradiction is left between the omnipotence of the king (and of the god his mandator) and the perfectibility of the border, a contradiction that is revealed in the very moment the texts try to solve it. The Pharaoh tries to remove the contradiction by stating that he extends his borders 'wherever he wants'.²⁶ This implies that his will finds a limit only in itself, in his judgement that it would be pedantic to seek comprehensive application of a theoretical principle whose relevance is instead exemplary, emblematic. Even more symptomatic of an evident contradiction between the centralist ideology and a more complex political world are the statements

about the absence of rivals, as in the Assyrian and Babylonian titles 'without rival / peer' or 'who has no adequate opponent',²⁷ or about freely 'taking' the borders of the enemies (Egyptian *ʾn ḏrw* Assyrian *ṣabit miṣrāt / mātāt nakiri*).²⁸ In the very moment that Amenophis II denies that any foreign country can have a border with him, he boasts about the conquest of foreign borders (in order not to be conquered himself!):

There is no one who makes a boundary (*t'š*) with him ... king of those who are subjects, ruler of those who are ruled, who acquires the boundaries of those who attack him ... There is no boundary made for him toward all countries united, toward all lands together.²⁹

This means that rivals are in fact conceivable (even if so inferior as to constitute no real challenge), that more lands do exist, that the inner borders of the world present a picture more complicated than one conceived as containing simply a frontier of cosmos against chaos. The idea of superiority is unavoidably shifting from an absolute to a relative one, the difference in nature becoming a difference in degree.

But as complex and contradictory as the expressions of ancient ideology can be, the paradigmatic value of the realization of the universal empire cannot be mistaken for effective political control. Claims about symbolically reaching the extreme boundaries of the world cannot be disguised so as to imply the administrative exploitation of foreign lands. Yet this kind of misunderstanding is still met in modern historical literature: the extent of the Egyptian empire in Syria-Palestine is mapped on the basis of mixed evidence, from exemplary achievements to effective rule (paying attention only to its extent, and not at all to its effectiveness),³⁰ or the ideal borders of Israel are misunderstood as delimiting real political formations.³¹ It is probable that not even the inner population of the time, the original addressee of the royal propaganda, exhibited the naivety to which an uncritical reading of the royal inscriptions has led some modern scholars.

4

Symbolic Attainment of the World Border

At the ideological level, the physical presence of the king in a remote country is sufficient to demonstrate political control. A successful expedition, even one designed more for reconnaissance than conquest, is all that is necessary for symbolic effect; an administrative machine, which could in any case eventually follow, is not required. It is in fact unbelievable that an area where the king freely walks, receives tribute and subdues the people should not be a part of the organized world, whatever the local political system. But is the symbolic achievement a definitive one, or will the peripheral area revert to chaos as soon as the king goes back to the central core? This is quite possible in terms of political control but his symbolic achievement will remain in the memory. As long as we remember that land, and it remembers the royal expedition, its place in the world as officially defined remains secure.

The appropriate device to obtain this result is a stela, an inscribed upright stone slab or rock relief, set up at the remotest point of the border.¹ The most obvious meaning, indeed the origin, of the celebrative stela is of course to be sought in the boundary markers used to define landed properties inside the territory of the community, and to make clear the state border in a technical sense (see Chapter 5). In a similar way, the stela set up at the very end of the world marks the possession of the universe by the king. But other metaphorical implications can be pointed out. Concerning territory, if we view the border as an elastic perimeter that follows the outward movements of the king, the stela, which has his name and image inscribed upon it, acts as a substitute for his presence. This keeps the perimeter fixed at the farthest point, even when the king returns to a more central position. The border remains 'anchored' to the stela, thus leaving the king free to move in other directions without sacrificing the gains of his earlier advance. And concerning time, the stela

keeps fresh the memory of this achievement (and therefore its effectiveness in terms of knowledge), so long as the 'name' of the king and preferably his image as well remain visible.

When Tuthmosis I and Tuthmosis III reached the Euphrates, they considered the 'great river running backwards' as a suitable substitute for the cosmic Ocean, and celebrated the attainment of the end of the world by erecting a stela. In the Annals of Tuthmosis III the achievement of both rulers is mentioned: 'He set up a stela east of this water, he set up another beside the stela of his father, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Tuthmosis (I).'² The Gebel Barkal stela is more detailed – being itself a celebrative monument set up at the southern end, and not by chance hinting so insistently at the reaching of the northern end:

The king ... crossed the Euphrates after the one who attacked him, at the head of his army, seeking that miserable enemy in the foreign lands of Mitanni. Lo, he fled before My Majesty to another land, a distant place, in fear. Then My Majesty set up my stela on that mountain of Naharina, carved in the mountain on the eastern side of the Euphrates.³

The heroic crossing of the river is underlined, the king going first and the troops following. This not only draws attention to the king's status but also implies that his soldiers would not have risked such a difficult passage had they not been moved by his example.

Two stelae set up at opposite ends of the world affirm universal control even more completely. In the Armant stela of Tuthmosis III, the Naharina rebels are juxtaposed to the Nubian ones and the stela set up on the Euphrates to the one set up on the Upper Nile:

He finished off 120 elephants in the country of Niya, on his return from Naharina. He crossed the river Great Bend (*phr wr* = Euphrates), and he crushed the towns on its two sides, consumed by fire forever. He set up a stela of victory on its east side ... He took rhinoceros by throwing arrows, in the southern land of Nubia, when he went to Miu looking for rebels in that country. He set up a stela as he had done on the Naharina boundaries.⁴

In the geopolitical expression 'from Naharina to Karoy'⁵ and its cosmological equivalent 'from the marshes of Asia to the Horn of the Earth',⁶ the extreme points are only two and are opposite to each other. As a result, they mark a full diameter, not simply a radius. Furthermore, they

follow the main axis of Egypt's orientation and so mark the diameter par excellence, the longest as well as the most meaningful.⁷

The same tradition of setting up stelae at the ends of the world exists in Mesopotamia and Anatolia as well. An old tradition, going back to Sargon of Akkad, is practised especially during the Old Babylonian period.⁸ In the period here considered, however, the custom is less well documented, though some Hittite hieroglyphic monuments on rocky hills close to the sea, like those of Sirkeli near Adana (Muwatalli) and of Karabel near Smyrne (Tudhaliya IV), can be attributed to such practices.⁹ Prominent forms along the coast, whether high mountains or small but conspicuous elevations, are the best location for a world boundary marker, bringing together 'Ocean shore' and 'mountain' features.¹⁰ In the small Nahr el-Kelb valley near Byblos a third element is also present. This is the spring in the cave, a typical gateway to the underworld. Over the centuries, stelae are added to stelae, by kings coming from both south (Ramesses II) and north (Assyria) and selecting the spot as emblematic of the end of the world, besides being the actual limit of their political sphere.¹¹

Of course, when there is a balance of power a universalistic ideology may be very difficult to realize, even at a purely symbolic level. Shuppiluliuma was able to 'establish Mt Lebanon as his border',¹² thus adding to his real conquest the symbolic value which the mountain provided. But when Adad-nirari I told Hattushili III of his wish to go to Mt Amanus, presumably in order to set up a celebrative stela, he received a refusal from the enraged Hittite king.¹³ Who knows in fact where ideology ends and real political involvement begins? Who can be sure that a symbolic statement will not eventually become the basis of a military or economic interest in the area?

The arrival at the farthest point and the setting up of a stela are the final, celebrative acts of a difficult process. The most peripheral regions (mountains, deserts, marshes, woodlands) are difficult to cross. This is not so much because of possible enemies – whose suppression is a routine affair – as of their physical characteristics. Doubt about whether or not they should be taken on is reasonable: since they are not inhabited, perhaps they should not be inhabited; since they are unsuitable for crossing, perhaps they should not be crossed. There is a logic in the geographical set-up of the world (which is the work of god): the meaning of these obstacles is that nobody has to venture this far. Do they belong to the world that has already been physically arranged by the gods and must now be politically and culturally arranged by the king, or are they instead part of the chaos, of darkness, of death?

In his task of world-building, the king ventures through these zones and opens new roads,¹⁴ improving them through technical and cultural activity so that they will remain fixtures in the human/civilized world. The opening of a new road entails splitting rocks and cutting timber in the mountains, digging wells in the desert, and so making access for less heroic followers that much easier.¹⁵

Apart from and beyond the technical construction of the road, what matters is its cognizance. Certainly any road is already known to the local population,¹⁶ but the only relevant knowledge belongs to members of the central country, the only really 'human' beings. Nobody has gone directly from centre to periphery before, the remote lands 'did not know' the central state and vice versa.¹⁷ When meeting the first Egyptians, the natives (who were already there, have always trodden those paths and truly know the places) are imagined as addressing them with questions like 'Why did you come to this foreign land (*h'st*), that men (*rmt*) do not know?'¹⁸ If the natives of Punt want to contact the Humans/Egyptians, they have to adopt the Egyptian point of view, the only relevant one. Consequently, they label their own land as peripheral and remote, they label as unknown to men (*rmt* means 'man' and 'Egyptian' alike) the place so familiar to them. In fact the correct knowledge is adjusted according to a relationship of polarity between centre and periphery. The Egyptian willingness to know Punt is reciprocated by the willingness of the Punt chieftains to know Egypt and Pharaoh.¹⁹ But Egypt 'knows' Punt in order to subdue and exploit it, while Punt 'knows' Egypt in order to submit and surrender its goods. Both parties establish a correct, unequivocal orientation of periphery toward centre. Other networks of knowledge and relationships (between different points of the periphery) obviously existed at a purely factual level but were ideologically irrelevant. A peripheral country really comes into existence only if it is known by 'us': if we see it, if we tread its paths, if we know its name (or give it a name), if we obtain its goods, if we put our boundary marker upon it. What remains beyond the borders of knowledge is irrelevant. Beyond the river, mountain or desert selected as the 'last' boundary, there are more lands, perhaps more people, but since they are unknown to us, they are incapable of any kind of independent existence.

5

The Coexistence of Different States

A rigidly centralist conception can be adopted only in isolation or conditions of marked cultural imbalance, and only so long as it does not come up against similar conceptions centred elsewhere. Geographical setting and historical events favoured the permanence of centralist views in Egypt, while multicentred perspectives soon developed in Western Asia as a result of the political, military and economic equilibrium which existed between its powers and the particularly intensive interaction which they experienced during the Second Millennium. In the Old Babylonian period (the formative period for symmetrical political views) a multicentred approach is already fully operative, as is apparent in the extensive diplomatic documentation of the time.¹

At the beginning of the Late Bronze period, Egypt also found itself in the historical situation most conducive to the acceptance of equals. The Hyksos ruled the Delta, a Theban dynasty the central valley, and a Nubian dynasty the territory south of Elephantine.² Between the three royal palaces a network of diplomatic relationships began to be established which was made up of letters and messengers, formalized announcements and procedures, and economic and juridical agreements; in the process, attention was paid to problems of rank and title, and conflict was displaced to the level of negotiations or even of 'wisdom'. In the first stela of Kamose, the choice between a multi- or monocentred policy is exploited as a literary device, but the debate between officials and king remains plausible nevertheless. The officials urge acceptance of plurality because of its economic advantages. Pharaoh, however, considers this to be a quite miserable prospect: 'To what end am I cognizant of it, this power of mine, when a chieftain is in Avaris, and another in Kush, and I sit in league with a Bedouin and a Negro, every man holding his slice of this Egypt?'³ Roles are allotted according to a literary pattern, using the

contrast with the 'chorus' of cautious advisers to highlight the firm and heroic conduct of the king. Yet this distinction in roles shows clearly that the monocentred ideology is motivated by prestige, the pluralistic one by interest.

If circumstances force abandonment of a centralist ideology, at least as far as inter-state contacts are concerned, the attendant loss in prestige has to be minimized as far as possible. This is achieved by giving careful attention to questions of rank and title. The long story of Egyptian resistance to the pluralistic ideology begins with Kamose questioning Apophis' right to assume the title of *ḥq'* '(sovereign) king' and addressing him instead as a *wr* 'big-one, chieftain',⁴ and ends with Ramesses II still applying to himself (in the treaty of equals with Hatti) the title *ḥq'* 'great king' and labelling Hattushili a *wr'* 'great chieftain' (cf. Chapter 16). It is true that there is a 'technical' reason for this, the *ḥq'* title being exclusively pertinent to Egypt (at least during the New Kingdom). But this is the point. Egypt considers itself so different from any other country that a real parity can be neither culturally conceived nor linguistically expressed: there are as many 'chiefs' as you like, but only one 'sovereign', namely ours.

Though Egypt is reluctant to go along, the problems of rank and title are settled in a standard arrangement which distinguishes 'great kings' and 'small kings' (*šarru rabû* vs. *šarru šilru*).⁵ A king who cannot officially pretend to be the only ruler in a universe of subjects, nevertheless does not necessarily consider everyone to be his equal. There remains a hierarchy in plurality, the result of a determination on the part of the powers to keep the partial, regional centrality that they have already attained. In this situation, an 'oligopoly' arrangement is best suited to the interests of its members, provided it can prevent the arrival of newcomers.

The 'great/small king' terminology is a technical one: the great king is independent and controls minor rulers who are his 'servants' (*ardu*); the small king is dependent upon a sovereign, his 'lord' (*bēlu*). The hierarchy in rank can be further expanded, the small king being in his turn the lord of petty kings, local chieftains, high officials and town leaders – thus dissolving itself within the inner organization of the state, even reaching the level of personal relationships (master/slave, husband/wife, etc.). This multi-level arrangement is important for it implies that the roles are descriptive of a relationship, not of an absolute quality. Everyone is at the same time both servant and lord; the great king himself is not excepted, being the 'servant' of the god. Relationships on horizontal and vertical axes are complex and possibly changing; there is a system of partnership quite at odds with the centralist ideology, where the king is lord of everyone and partner of none.

The hierarchical arrangement is generally accepted, great and small kings alike acknowledging their respective positions, the latter being unable to subsist without an overlord. The relationship is in fact a reciprocal one, albeit unbalanced. The small king must maintain his 'loyalty' (*kittu*) to the great one, but has the right to be 'saved/rescued' (*šūzubu*) by him; each has to 'protect' (*našāru*) the other, even if in different ways and in different circumstances (cf. Chapter 17). When Shuppiluliuma observes the loyalty of Niqmadu, he rewards him with the rank of vassal, with the ensuing tribute:

The Sun, the Great King, saw the loyalty of Niqmadu, and behold, Shuppiluliuma, the Great King, king of Hatti, stipulated a treaty for Niqmadu king of Ugarit on these terms: your tribute to the Sun, the Great King, your lord: (the list follows).⁶

The tribute listed is very heavy, and because in our ideology tribute is a punishment rather than a reward the text may appear somewhat paradoxical. Nevertheless, the inner logic both of the text and its ideology is quite coherent, the premise being that Niqmadu himself asked for this kind of relationship which is no less favourable to him than to his overlord: 'Let the Great King, my lord, save me from the hands of my enemy! I am a servant of the Sun, the Great King, my lord.'⁷

In the Asiatic ideology the position of 'Great King' brings about a series of obligations. These are basically connected to the sphere of 'protection' and are quite extraneous to the ideology of the Egyptians. Not infrequently, the Pharaoh (as seen from the perspective of his Syro-Palestinian subjects) seems to behave incorrectly in failing to understand that his role entails active policies of presence and intervention. Consequently, he receives requests such as the following: 'You are a great king: do not restrain from this matter!' or 'Let the king, my lord, not restrain from this mischief which has been perpetrated against the land of the king, my lord!'⁸ By contrast, a small king cannot launch any intervention outside (and above) his own sphere: 'Who do they think they are, the sons of Abdi-Ashirta, the servant and dog? Are they perhaps the king of Kashu, or the king of Mitanni, that they take the land of the king [Pharaoh] for themselves?'; 'He (= Aziru) sent his men to take the Amqi-land ... Not even the Hatti king or the Na'rima (= Mitanni) king had done that!'⁹ For lands belonging to Pharaoh to be taken by the Kassite, Hittite or Hurrian great kings is conceivable; if it reflects an adverse shift in the balance of power it is also acceptable. But that a similar fate might be suffered at the hands of small kings (who are 'servants') is simply

unimaginable: this would represent a moral rather than political upheaval.

Rank is politically determined by power relationships but culturally earned by formalized behaviour. Great kings have to know how to conduct themselves and act accordingly: 'Now my brother wrote to me as a great king, one peer to me in rank: will I not listen to the word of one peer to me in rank?'; 'Even if there is no treaty with Egypt, the (Hatti) queen knows how you (= Pharaoh) acted according to my high rank'.¹⁰ Formalized behaviour insures against the possibility of being overpowered by a peer: as a result, the rules are not empty etiquette but significant messages. Explicit protests are occasioned by the incorrect formulation of the address or greetings in letters.¹¹ For a great king the utmost offence is not to be considered as such by his peers, to be debased to a 'second rank': 'You called me second in rank and dust! ... You called dust a great king!'¹² Even if the debasement refers to a third person, and is the result of a rhetorical argument, the truth must be re-established: 'If you should say: "The king of Babylon is not a great king", then my brother does not know the country of Babylon, what rank it is!'¹³

Rank, being determined by power relations and personal behaviour, is not a 'natural' quality which is ascribed once and for all: the evaluation is formalized but can be changed. The discussion on the rank of the Babylonian king may be merely rhetorical (it is also a further reflection of the Egyptian difficulty in accepting parity with Asiatic kings), but more marginal cases may be really difficult to decide. When compiling a list of the first-rank kingdoms, the Hittite scribe writes: 'The kings who are my peers are: the king of Egypt, the king of Babylon, the king of Assyria, the king of Ahhiyawa.'¹⁴ However, he then erases the last name, following a second thought that would not be understandable if his first was not to some extent acceptable as well.

Clamorous cases of growth and decay are not lacking. Apart from the far-fetched and short-lived attempt by Amurru and the silent and cautious growth of Karkemish, among the instances of growth the Assyrian case is paramount. Assyria, reduced to its historical core, encircled by the Mitanni kingdom in the fifteenth century BC, acquires under Ashur-uballit I a position of 'great kingdom'¹⁵ that her neighbours are reluctant to acknowledge. Ashur-uballit assumes the title of 'great king' and starts diplomatic and trade contacts with Egypt, at the outset making a case for being accepted as peer to and heir of Mitanni, and immediately provoking a violent but ineffective reaction on the part of the Babylonian king: 'The Assyrians, my subjects, I did not send them: why did they come to your land by their own will? If you are a friend, let them not conclude any

buying, let them go back empty-handed!’¹⁶ A Babylonian tutelage (not to say overlordship) of Assyria is unthinkable either at the time of Ashur-uballit or just before. Clearly, the Babylonian king tries to exploit Egyptian ignorance of and interest in Mesopotamian affairs in order to present himself as overlord of Assyria but Amenophis is not impressed. The first Assyrian letter is paradigmatic in the Amarna corpus on the way a new partnership has to be started: by a balanced contrast of tradition and innovation, a careful dosing of interest and moderation.¹⁷ The second letter is astonishingly confident, almost arrogant:¹⁸ the new member in the ‘club of the great powers’ immediately reveals his character and all the repressed ambitions of his country.

Later on, when the documentation shifts to Hatti-Assyria relations, nobody can deny the role of Assyria as a ‘great kingdom’. However, the frequent acknowledgements of this makes it clear that it was still (even after a century!) regarded as a novelty. In writing to Tukulti-Ninurta immediately after the death of his father, Tudhaliya acknowledges that Shalmaneser ‘became a great king ... he defeated with the weapons great kings ... from small king he became a great king’,¹⁹ in order to make sure that the expansion has now to stop (‘keep your father’s boundaries!’). In other cases the connotation seems to be rather ironic, mentioned for the sake of argumentation: ‘since you are a great king, not a second-rank one’, you have to read carefully my letters, to answer correctly and to act consequently, as great kings are supposed to do.²⁰ The suggestion behind mention of the rank may even be one of ill-concealed irritation, as if the material facts cannot be denied but acceptance of the newcomer as a peer with all its social implications (as a ‘brother’) is hard: ‘It is true, you defeated with your weapons (the Hurri king), and you are now become a great king. But why do you speak to me in terms of brotherhood?’;²¹ ‘You advanced toward east and made Mount [...] as your border, you advanced toward west and took the cities that Shuppiluliuma had conquered with his weapons and were tributary of the God. But why are you always writing to me?’²²

The Hittite king adopts a patronizing tone to the newcomer, explaining how a great king is expected to behave. If the fact that a young king has only recently been enthroned is taken by his subjects as an opportunity for revolt, he is advised that: ‘among us kings, one writes to another for aid.’ But the Assyrian king replies to this condescension on the part of his older colleague with fierce arrogance: ‘I will never write to another king for aid!’²³

The actual political prospect (whereby protection and help could lead to protectorate and tutelage) unveils a conceptual contrast between a

behaviour which is fully integrated into the traditional network of reciprocal brotherhood and protection, and one of self-sufficiency and unrestricted movement. The behaviour of the Assyrians is prompted by past experiences of submission and the impetus of recent growth, and is easily projected toward a greater expansion in the future. Such a projection is easy for us, since we actually know what Assyria became. But the Hatti kings demonstrated that they were good prophets in fearing that the 'last arrival' would not be satisfied with merely having entered the circle of great kings, and would want to expand more and more at the risk of making the whole system collapse.

The same authority of tradition which delays the recognition of new powers also delays and plays down the reduced status of defeated kingdoms. At least in his statements, Shuppiluliuma shows goodwill in retaining a special status for Mitanni: 'Having supported by my hand Shattiwaza, son of Tushratta the king, I will let him sit on his father's throne. And in order that the Mitanni country – which is a great country – be not destroyed, the great king, king of Hatti, will let the Mitanni country live ... I, the great king, king of Hatti, let the dead Mitanni country live, and restore it to its place.'²⁴ It is true that Hatti needs a substantial Mitanni kingdom in order to keep the Assyrians away from the Euphrates, but the kind of privileged attention indicated here is motivated by consideration for the former status of Mitanni as a 'great kingdom' – otherwise its treatment would have been much more heavy-handed, as was usual for small kingdoms already under the sway of some great power.

Similar caution had been used by Hatti when the status of Kizzuwatna was reduced, probably as a result of diplomatic rather than military intervention. Kizzuwatna had also been a 'great kingdom' at the time of Ishputahshu, and a tradition of Hatti-Kizzuwatna parity treaties was a feature of the whole of the fifteenth century.²⁵ At the moment of formalizing its lowered status, the old tradition is preserved as far as possible; it is even inflated by an endless sequence of symmetrical clauses.²⁶ Moreover, the Kizzuwatna king is exempted from tribute (though this implies that he is a potential tributary), and some minor, formal privileges – such as the obligation of the Hittite courtiers to remain standing in his presence – are granted to him. As in the case of Mitanni, so with Kizzuwatna the contours of practical submission to Hatti are clearly visible, as are the latter's political problems and aims – Kizzuwatna being a buffer-state against Mitanni. Yet at the formal level it is basically a question of rank, a concern for symmetry, a refusal to countenance the complete annihilation of a once 'great kingdom' – the last, by contrast, being so characteristic of the centralist ideology.

The memory of Aleppo's status as a 'great kingdom' in the Mari age was still alive three centuries later. This memory is not a neutral, innocuous one: it is the source of real concern because an active and autonomous policy, even an expansionist one, which is impossible to a small king, could be legitimate and natural for a kingdom which was once 'great' and could become great again: 'In olden times the kings of the Aleppo country held the position of great kings. Hattushili, the great king, king of Hatti, put an end to their kingship ... In the future the kingship of the Aleppo country shall not expand at the expense of the Hatti king.'²⁷ The Hittite kings are so worried by the memory of Yamhad, that they will progressively eliminate the kingdom of Aleppo, in the meantime permitting the growth of Karkemish (which had no similar tradition), only to realize (perhaps too late) that this kingdom was 'becoming great at the expense of the Hatti king'. A similar case is provided by Tarhuntasha, which for a while was the Hittite capital under Muwatalli.²⁸

In a system that is multicentred but tending to the 'oligopolistic', change in the political status of a kingdom produces a disturbance, though – while dangerous – not one which is incompatible with this kind of system. By contrast, of course, it would be entirely inconsistent with one predicated on a centralist ideology. The various great kings deny full rights and freedom to the small ones but the position of the great kings is weaker than that of the ruler of the universal empire. This is because, in order to negotiate and preserve contacts, they set in motion an 'open' mechanism in which the small kings are also inclined to take part. This leads to a basic difference of opinion between the great and the small kings over the issue of whether or not expansion by the latter at the expense of 'third' states is compatible with their formal subservience to their respective overlords.

The most interesting document on this complex dialectic is the long memorandum-letter written by a Hittite king to Madduwatta, a subject king who acted too independently in the large and complex sector of south-western Anatolia.²⁹ It seems that Madduwatta did not directly threaten Hittite sovereignty, which he readily concedes would be wrong, but he did threaten that of others – and this the Hatti king cannot approve. The Hittite 'theory' is that Madduwatta received some lands to rule from his lord on the understanding that he would stay within their borders. Madduwatta's 'theory', however, is that he is as free as any other independent king to push beyond them, provided that he respects Hittite territory itself. This is clear in the case of his conquest of Hapalla, Iyalanti, Zumarri and Wallarima. Hapalla alone was Hatti-land and, following a protest by the Hatti king, Madduwatta returns this to him but keeps the

rest. The same difference arises over Alashiya (Cyprus): the juridical problem for Madduwatta is to ascertain whether the island 'belonged to the Sun' or not, while the Hittite king considers Madduwatta's conduct as illegitimate whatever its status. Comparison with other kings is also irrelevant, since they are 'independent' (*kurewaneš*) while Madduwatta is a servant of the Sun.³⁰ As we shall see (Chapter 8), if the overlord is considered by the other great kings to be responsible, he could suffer retaliation, or be forced to renounce his claims to be overlord of regions where sovereignty is indeterminate. Therefore, he cannot tolerate the launching of aggressive action from his own sphere of influence.

Of course these opposing 'theories' of the rights of small kings are nothing more than opposing rhetorical arguments, ways of reasoning which are most suited to the interests of their proponents – but this is generally the kind of theorizing that we find in the texts of that time. Whether it is at a general or more specific level, a discussion of this sort is inconceivable in a monocentric system. When Pharaoh has to face an Aziru acting more or less like Madduwatta, he prefers simply to ignore the real political problems, confining his message to a demand for loyalty and devotion – and then suddenly shifting to a specific request for the delivery of some refugees.³¹ From the Egyptian perspective, the political 'moves' of the king of Amurru are irrelevant since the higher and unique role of Pharaoh is not in doubt: they probably belong to the tedious troubles so typical of the peoples of the 'chaotic' periphery.

6

Moving Borders

In a pluralist appreciation of the political world, the displacement of borders is not motivated or characterized in the same way that it is in a centralist ideology. Every state certainly aims to extend its control into surrounding areas, in order to satisfy its prestige or the glory of its gods – and to ensure a greater income. But this objective is challenged and balanced by similar ones on the part of neighbouring states, the ideal result being a stable territorial equilibrium.

We have already seen (Chapter 3) that in the centralist ideology borders should always be moving outwards. Non-expansion is considered a failure on the part of the king, a symptom of an inadequacy produced by incapacity, illegitimacy, impiousness or criminality that has resulted in his abandonment by the gods. Such a circumstance is never a feature of the present, that is during the reign of the king who is the author of the document. However, it might have occurred in the past and is now recalled in order to underline by contrast how the present king (who is legitimate, pious, clever and righteous) was able to restore the correct relationship with the gods and consequently the correct situation on the borders – one which sees them moving outwards. Tutankhamun refers to the 'heretical' Amarna period when recalling that 'If an army was sent to Djahi in order to enlarge the boundaries of Egypt, it did not meet any success'.¹ And Telipinu refers to the parricide Ammuna, the lowest point reached by Hittite kingship in morality, distance from the gods, and military success: 'Wherever his army went to battle, it did not come back victorious.'²

In pluralist ideology, ideally the border is fixed but in practice it fluctuates in both directions according to the balance of forces between adjacent states. At any one time the actual border may be the product either of diplomacy or war, but in either event it is evidence of an agreed

accommodation, the result of two wills in search of an optimal solution, not within an empty, chaotic periphery but inside a fully ordered and politically parcelled world. In the 'Synchronic History' (a text that would have been neither accepted nor even conceived in a centralist ideology), the story of the relations between Assyria and Babylonia is to a large extent the story of a border, most sections ending with the definition of a boundary by the issue of a battle or the stipulation of a treaty.³

Two characteristic features can be seen in this text. First of all, the establishment of a border – even if it takes place at the end of a war, with the winner in the strongest position – is a joint activity and the product of agreement between the parties. Echoing the language of inheritance, the 'fixing' of borders is viewed as a 'sharing', a 'dividing in equal parts'.⁴ The same attitude is evident and the same terminology used in the Shunashura treaty:

Starting from the sea: the city of Lamiya belongs to my Sun, the city of Pitura belongs to Shunashura; the border-land in between them they measured and divided ... The city of Aruna belongs to my Sun; toward the city of Pitura they measured the border and divided among them ... The city of Shaliya belongs to my Sun, the cities of Zinziluwa and Arima belong to Shunashura: the border-land in between them they measured and divided.⁵

The cities are listed in opposed pairs, with the border in between. As for the act of 'measuring', this belongs to the technique of land-surveying⁶ usually employed in a homogeneous community; it is transferred to the international setting to signify both that the bordering states consider each other as equal and that the border is fixed by mutual agreement rather than by a qualitative differentiation of territory. What neither the Synchronic History nor the Shunashura treaty explicitly reveals is the previous ownership of these lands so carefully and equally measured. But it is obvious that the shared territory originally belonged entirely to the defeated country, and that what we are dealing with in fact is an annexation. Yet instead of being viewed as an 'enlargement' of the winner's borders, it is viewed as an equitable division between two partners, as a symmetrical and not a mono-directional arrangement.

The second interesting feature in symmetrical borders is the need for their concrete and detailed definition. The border is not a cosmic one: it is not located on the Ocean shore or on a high mountain but crosses inhabited lands and separates villages and fields of similar appearance. It could be located elsewhere, in fact anywhere, and unless we materialize it

with boundary markers we run the risk of being unable to identify it. The celebrative stela symbolizing the universal domain finds its counterpart in the boundary stone, the marker separating two properties, two sovereignties. The celebrative stela does not identify a border (this is already quite impressive and recognizable by itself): it demonstrates that the king has been there. Moreover, the stela of the centralist ideology is one-sided: it separates cosmos and chaos, existence and non-existence, occupied and unoccupied territory. In contrast, the boundary marker of pluralist ideology defines a border which would be otherwise unrecognizable, and separates two equally valid territories: 'These decisions were executed by the *uriyannu*: he separated the borders between Ugarit and Siyannu, he erected landmarks on the border between them'.⁷

Some concern is still kept for natural borders; this perhaps hints at recognition of their cosmic value but is chiefly a result of their greater functionality. When Shuppiluliuma fixes the border between Karkemish and Mitanni a bit more to the east of the Euphrates, so allotting the entire valley (western and eastern sides alike) to the king of Karkemish, the impression is left that the 'natural' and 'traditional' boundary should be the river itself:

I conquered the Mitanni lands ... I established the Euphrates river on the back and the Mt Lebanon as my boundaries. All the cities of the Ashtata land on this bank: Murmurik, Shipri, Mazuwati, Shurun, these cities in the district of [...] I allotted to my son Piyashili. All the cities of the Ashtata land on the other bank, which are located in the Mitanni land: Ekalte, [...], Ahuna and Terqa, these cities of the Ashtata land, since the king's son Piyashili together with the king's son Shattiwaza crossed the Euphrates and entered Irrite, all these cities on the other bank that Piyashili took, let he keep them: they belong to Piyashili.⁸

The passage is notable in contrasting a 'natural' border (albeit not devoid of cosmic implications: the great river, the high mountain) and a political/administrative one which is explicitly shaped by historical events. Notoriously, the east bank is traditionally Mitanni territory, the river crossing marking the passage from one political unit to the next. But a specific crossing of the river by Piyashili must be rewarded, and Shattiwaza can hardly disagree since he owes his throne to it. Thus the two 'king's sons' (one the natural son, the other a son-in-law and adoptive son) share their father's inheritance in equity and goodwill.

Quite different had been the behaviour of other kings, who tried to take advantage of the crisis of Mitanni in order to 'share' the land among

themselves – but not with the legitimate dynasty: ‘All the Mitanni land went to ruin; the Assyrians and the Alsheans divided it among them.’⁹ The act of ‘sharing’, which is a feature of justice when accomplished by ‘us’, becomes dismemberment when accomplished by others.

The practical need for identification, the contractual origin and the parity in rank between neighbours cause state borders to be modelled on internal boundaries, which ideally are stable and immovable.¹⁰ The normative texts, contracts and boundary markers themselves agree in forbidding any displacement of borders, and in condemning it as the result of disorder, injustice, oppression.¹¹ It is also axiomatic that the ideal state border has been established ‘since time immemorial’, ‘since olden times’.

In the event that, contrary to tradition, the state border has been subject to a measure of displacement, some rhetorical or juridical way out is considered necessary. The easiest one is simply to deny that displacement has occurred. As a reward for his help, the Hittite king had decided to assign a more favourable northern border to Ugarit at the expense of the rebel Mukish. When subsequently Mukish (in the meantime fully integrated into Hittite territory) protests, the great king answers that no displacement ever took place, that the border had always remained in its correct position – while at the same time probably displacing it again, this time to the advantage of Mukish:

As to the cities in the border districts of Mukish that Shuppiluliuma assigned to Niqmadu, king of Ugarit, in a treaty tablet, now Niqmepa, son of Niqmadu, addressed to the Great King as follows: ‘The sons of Mukish bring an action against me, Niqmepa, about these cities’. When Murshili, the Great King, made an inquiry on this case, the cities that since olden times belonged to Ugarit, now Murshili, the Great King, confirmed them to Niqmepa, king of Ugarit.¹²

The political problem is presented as a juridical case (*dīnu*), and in order to prepare the obvious conclusion (i.e. Mukish getting back his border villages) it is presented to the suzerain by Niqmepa himself. The contradiction between a case concerning ‘the Mukish border cities’ and the judgement being about ‘the cities belonging to Ugarit since olden times’ is obvious, since the two categories are different. The implication is that the Hittite king returns the Mukish villages without further penalizing Ugarit’s traditional territory; and that the decision of Shuppiluliuma and the treaty agreement are changed by Murshili without any change being mentioned.

Sometimes a change in the position of a border is too obvious to be denied, as when the whole territory of Siyannu shifts from the overlordship of Ugarit to that of Karkemish. In this case, the change is explained by the free will of the inhabitants rather than by a new balance of power:

Since olden times the king of Ugarit and the king of Siyannu constituted a unity. As the years passed, Abdi-Anati king of Siyannu separated himself from Niqmepa king of Ugarit and turned toward the king of Karkemish: he is now his subject. Murshili, the Great King, separated Abdi-Anati king of Siyannu and his sons from the king of Ugarit, and gave them in servitude to the king of Karkemish.¹³

The same free will of the subject country in choosing its relationship of dependence on one or another great king is normally acknowledged, provided it has not been reduced to 'servitude' by military defeat and the final arrangement is to the advantage of the king who is narrating the story:

Formerly, in the time of my grandfather, the Kizzuwatna land belonged to Hatti. But later on the Kizzuwatna land separated itself from Hatti and turned toward Hurri ... Now the Kizzuwatna land separated itself from the Hurri king and turned itself toward my Sun.¹⁴

If the final arrangement is not satisfactory, i.e. if the small king makes use of his free will to submit to others instead of us, we can always use force to show him the error of his ways:

Formerly the Amurru land had not been subdued by the Hatti weapons. When Aziru came to the grandfather of my Sun, Shuppiluliuma, in Hatti, the Amurru lands were still enemies: they were servants of the Hurri king ... But when Muwatalli, the uncle of my Sun, became king, then the Amurru people sinned. So they said: 'By our free will we became servants; but now we are no longer servants!', and they turned toward the king of Egypt. So the uncle of my Sun, Muwatalli, and the king of Egypt fought against one another for the Amurru people. Muwatalli won and subdued the Amurru land by weapons.¹⁵

We know for sure that, in the time of Shuppiluliuma, Amurru was not a subject of Hurri but of Egypt. But it is inconvenient for the Hittite king to recall this now, when Amurru intends once more to place itself under Egyptian suzerainty, because it might legitimize Amurru's proposed action. Consequently, it seems wiser to say that 'the Amurru lands' (in the plural)

had been subject to Hurri, which is basically true if Amurru is understood in its wider meaning as Syria. Only a very attentive reader can spot the difference in meaning between 'the Amurru land' defining a specific kingdom, and 'the Amurru lands' defining a wider geographical region.¹⁶

Lastly, by considering the border as fixed by nature, displacements can be viewed as concerning not it but the lands and peoples who 'enter' and 'go out' through it. In a passage, which culminates in a hint at the cosmic idea of an optimal border (the great river, the high mountain next to the Ocean), Shuppiluliuma narrates his great Syrian expedition as follows:

Akiya king of Arahti, Aki-Teshub brother of Takuwa, and their *maryannu*, all of them I captured with their goods and I let them enter into the Hatti land. The city of Qatna with its goods and its properties I let them enter into the Hatti land ... In one year only, I took and let enter all these lands into the Hatti lands. From Mt Lebanon to the other bank of the Euphrates I restored them into my border.¹⁷

The use of the same verb both for immovable lands and movable people and goods is sometimes functional to a deliberately ambiguous diplomatic discourse. But it also reflects both a social reality in which entire communities can displace themselves (see Chapter 9) and a valuation of territory (see Chapter 7) based more on the wealth it generates than on mere spatial control.

The compromise between the centralist and the pluralist views is not easy, perhaps impossible. Even Egypt was at times forced to accept territorial and border negotiations with Asiatic kingdoms (Mitanni, later Hatti). The formulation in the Ramesses–Hattushili treaty is such as to reveal not an adaptation of the centralist ideology to the symmetrical view, but instead a clear-cut separation of a context in which symmetry is accepted and one in which it is denied. In the context of the (traditionally Egyptian) introduction, strictly intended for the internal Egyptian audience, Ramesses keeps with unaffected ease the traditional title 'who establishes his boundary as far as he wants, in any land',¹⁸ but in the juridical clauses, addressed to and negotiated with the outer political partner, the mutual respect of borders is fully accepted: 'The great prince of Hatti will not transgress against the land of Egypt in order to take anything from it. And Ramesses, the great king of Egypt, will not transgress against the land of Hatti in order to take anything from it, forever.'¹⁹ A compromise between the two contradictory statements is both impossible and unnecessary, given the diversity in discourse level and typology, and in addressees of the message.

7

The Boundary as a Watershed for Taxation

If the political centre is regarded as the centre of the entire world, there is no need to explain in detail where the boundary is located: it is right 'at the end'. Nor is any detail necessary when the states are many but border territories that are inaccessible or uninhabited: mountains, woodlands, steppe and desert, any uncultivated and unsettled area. The territory controlled by the state resembles an 'oasis': there is no need for a boundary line, but rather for 'gateways', channels of controlled communication with other states (or other inhabited areas) beyond the depopulated belt. In Egypt, the desert and the sea provide natural boundaries but the two 'gates' facing Nubia and Asia have to be efficiently arranged. This permits communication and the transfer of goods and people, while also – and most importantly – allowing the filtering out of any dangerous external elements. The Nubian gateway, the Nile valley around the Second Cataract, had been fortified during the Middle Kingdom with a series of impressive fortresses. The Semna stelae of Sesostri III perfectly define the function of the gateway as a filter permitting only the desired goods (not men) to enter from an outer region which, clearly being seen as alien and dangerous, is to be excluded and exorcized.¹ Later on, during the New Kingdom, the Egyptian sphere expanded, fear became less dramatic² and the impressive fortresses of the Middle Kingdom fell into disuse.

As for the gateway to Asia, which was strongly protected during the Middle Kingdom by the fortified line of the 'Wall of the Ruler', this became much more 'open' during the New Kingdom, while still retaining its function as a filter. The frontier post is bureaucratically organized, movements are recorded day by day, with names, directions, purposes:

Regnal year 3, first month of Shomu, day 15. Going up by the retainer Ba'alry son of Djapero of Gaza. What he took to Syria: 2 dispatches, viz.

(for) the garrison-commander Kha'y, 1 dispatch; (for) the prince of Tyre Ba'altermeg, 1 dispatch.³

When a contact (a messenger, a trade caravan) has to be established with the next political centre, the confused, segmented and shifting world that lies in between constitutes a problem. If every small kinglet of Syria-Palestine were to pretend to act as a filter, deciding who is permitted to pass or pay a tax, the communications between Egypt and Mitanni would become impossible. The great kings have to make it clear to their subject kings that their minor borders are irrelevant from the higher point of view. We have an exemplar of the free pass used by the Mitannian messenger,⁴ and we have similar documents pointing to a common practice.⁵ The Egyptian free passes were quite similar, to judge from the answer of one of the addressees:

The king my lord sent me Haya in order to say: 'This caravan (to) Hanigalbat, they sent it: let it pass!' Who am I, not to let pass the caravans of the king my lord!? Look: Lab'aya my father was a servant of the king my lord, and he let pass all the caravans that the king sent to Hanigalbat or to Karduniash. Let the king my lord send the caravan: I will forward it in a maximum of protection.⁶

These 'free passes' suggest that the Egyptian frontier in Asia was much more deep than it was wide – or, put more accurately, that the empire resembled more a network than a territory.

A more detailed and continuous demarcation of borders is of course necessary in fully settled areas. But even in these cases the boundary is not viewed as a geometrical line delimiting surfaces, but rather as a watershed of inhabited sites facing one or another catchment area, centred on one or another royal palace. Instead of locating a precise boundary line (an impossible operation without a map), what matters is to establish and make clear in which direction each settlement has to send its contributions in products and workforce. Such a 'directional' demarcation of borders is functional both to densely settled areas (where detailed definition is essential) and to sparsely populated ones (the mountains being a typical case). The extent to which the definition of the border needs to be detailed varies with the intensity of land use. Thus it is at its clearest in agricultural areas which split up into villages and family properties, and at its least clear in areas which are nobody's property.

The definition of boundaries not as lines but as lists of settlements politically and economically oriented toward the respective royal palaces

is not the outcome of technical problems. Instead, it is the expression of a mentality, being used even if the availability of real dividing lines (rivers) renders the contraposed lists technically superfluous.⁷

The other possible 'literary pattern' for border definition is a list of all the cities (or villages) belonging to one of the bordering states, a pattern that, when applied to small state formations, leads to a complete listing of its settlements.⁸ In defining the boundary between Ugarit and Mukish, Shuppiluliuma (and Murshili after him) lists only the cities belonging to Ugarit, a long list ending with the summary: 'Now Shuppiluliuma, the great king, king of Hatti, the hero, these border districts, cities and mountains, allotted to Niqmadu king of Ugarit and to his sons and grandsons forever.'⁹ The 'border districts' are defined as 'settlements' and as 'mountains', i.e. the contributive communities and their sparsely settled edges. Lands and villages are not really viewed as constitutive elements of a state formation; they are allotted or granted to a royal palace, even personally to the king and his descendants. They are landed properties (with a juridical validation and guarantee by the overlord) from which a rent will be drawn.

The extreme case is a land partition which only constitutes a fiscal boundary and is in no way a geographical one. When crossing the village of Harmana,¹⁰ the Ugarit-Siyannu boundary becomes geometrically very complex (with possible enclaves and no continuous line), but remains fiscally very clear. As a result, the topographical description gives way to a statement wherein the single fields have to send their revenues in the direction of their owners, either the people of the Ugaritic villages of Mulukki and Galba or the king of Siyannu. Even more pronounced is the economic character of the same Ugarit-Siyannu boundary when crossing a plot of land laid out for salt production:

As for the question of the salt, the king of Ugarit and the king of Siyannu said as follows: 'The saltern surface is three acres'. (Therefore) I give to Niqmepa king of Ugarit one acre of saltern, I give to Abdi-Anati king of Siyannu one acre of saltern, and the third acre I give two thirds to the king of Ugarit and one third to the king of Siyannu.¹¹

This is not a state border; it is a partition of revenues. Nor is it a special problem caused by the fact that the boundary happened to cross the saltern; quite the opposite, the border line had to cross the saltern precisely in order to obtain this balanced division of its products.

The operation of surplus gathering, which is legitimate inside one's own territory, becomes 'plunder' when carried on in neighbouring countries.

The boundary divides areas legitimately exploited by different kings, who can 'take' their own cities but no others: 'All the cities of Shattiwaza that are located on the bank of the Euphrates, let him (= Piyashili) keep them; but another city on the bank of the Euphrates let him not take'.¹² The same prohibition against taking more cities than those within one's own borders is officially addressed by Murshili to Kupanta-Kurunta:

On this side, from the city of Maddunasha, the encampment of Tudhaliya shall be your border, on the (other) side the garrison-post of Wiyanawanda shall be your border. You shall not cross over beyond the city of Aura. On this side the Ashtarpa river shall be the border of the Kuwaliya land. This land will be yours: protect it! But do not occupy any other city beyond the Ashtarpa river and the Shiyanta river. If you occupy just one city (more), you transgress the gods' oath. I will arrive and hit you as an enemy.¹³

The prohibition is so obvious as to seem unnecessary, but the establishment of a boundary (a mutually agreed one) is often the outcome of a long series of transgressions by both parties. A case in point is the border agreement between Piyashili and Shattiwaza, Hatti and Mitanni each having been for long ready to exact retribution on the opposite bank of the river for depredations suffered on its own: 'If you plunder the lands beyond the Euphrates on this bank, I will plunder the lands beyond the Euphrates on that bank.'¹⁴ Not so different from plunder is the unlawful occupation of lands belonging to a neighbour: both represent attempts to gain economic advantage from resources beyond the border. The 'negative' reciprocity is quite the same: 'If I enter your border district and I sow, you will harvest; now you entreed my border district and sowed, I will harvest'.¹⁵

In the centralized ideology, plunder beyond the border is a routine activity (Chapter 12), and a highly valued one: the 'empty', 'chaotic' periphery is right there as an additional source of revenues, and no reaction is to be feared. In a symmetrically arranged world, on the other hand, plundering beyond the borders does not – by definition – take place in a political void and may thus invite retaliation.

In the inter-state ethics of this period it is evident from the relevant documents that mutual plundering is in fact condemned. It is evident in oral negotiations, as when Murshili says to the Azzi king 'I went but I stopped before the border of your land. I did not hit your land, I did not take away any prisoner, sheep and goats'.¹⁶ It is evident in treaties, as when we find it stated in the Shuppiluliuma-Shattiwaza one that 'Until

now I did not cross to the other side, I did not take a blade of straw or a splinter of wood from the Mitanni land'.¹⁷ And it is evident in letters, as when Tukulti-Ninurta informs Tudhaliya that 'No one sinned against your land, no one removed a blade of straw or a splinter of wood from the march of your land.'¹⁸

However, when addressing the inner Assyrian audience, the same Tukulti-Ninurta discards this international ethic and adopts that of the centralized ideology. Thus he boasts: 'In my first year I deported 28,800 people of the Hatti-land from beyond the Euphrates, and I brought (them) into my land.'¹⁹ The differences in the level of discourse, addressee and purpose explain sufficiently the 'contradiction' between the two opposite statements of the Assyrian king. Of course, the Hatti king has no access to the Assyrian celebrative inscriptions, and the inner Assyrian audience does not know (through alternative channels) the details of the political situation.

Many more examples could of course be quoted which demonstrate the positive evaluation of foreign booty in centralized ideology, and we shall consider this topic when dealing with war (Chapters 13 and 14). But in official international contacts the idea is clear that every land is tributary in one direction only, and this monopoly of exploitation is the most evident (perhaps the only) feature of political dependence. Thus paying tribute to the 'wrong' overlord is as serious as not paying it to the 'correct' one – or to neither. Murshili is still worried that the kings of Amurru, heirs of the two-faced Aziru, should not pay to a wrong overlord the tribute now exclusively due to him:

The tribute that was established for your grandfather and for your father – 300 shekels of refined, first-quality gold, by the weights of Hatti – they paid. You shall pay it likewise, and you shall not turn your eyes to another. Your fathers paid tribute to Egypt: you shall not pay it!²⁰

That the overlord is the 'wrong' one is obvious because he cannot even ensure the 'protection' which the dependent expects from a tributary relationship. Here is the story of the last king of Mitanni, as told by the Assyrian king: 'After his (Shattuara's) death, Wasashatta, his son, revolted, rebelled against me, and committed hostilities. He went to the land of Hatti for aid. The Hittites took his bribe but did not render him assistance.'²¹ The valued, orderly and functional system of tribute in return for protection becomes a disqualifying bribe (*ta'tu*, cf. Chapter 29), paying for mercenary troops, when applied in the wrong direction.

8

The Boundary as a Watershed for Responsibilities

Within a precisely delimited territory, the state not only has a monopoly in surplus collecting but also in the use of force. The corollary of the exclusive right to use force inside one's own borders is recognition of an equal right on the part of kings in adjacent state-formations. In a monocentred political ideology the king of the world will punish rebellions and crimes whatever their character and wherever they take place, not least in the outer periphery, where they are such a marked feature of that chaotic zone. Apart from being harmful to humans, rebellions and crimes are a threat to and an offence against the cosmic order. As such, they require royal intervention wherever they occur.

If he wishes to maintain firm authority over his territory, every king in a multicentred political world has to ensure order and satisfy requests for punishment or compensation, even if they come from outside. Conversely, he must insist on punishment or compensation for crimes committed in the territory of a neighbouring 'colleague'. Only this system of separate responsibilities and efficient reparations can guarantee all the kingdoms against foreign intervention motivated by juridical or ethical complaints. The area that seems to belong to the unreliable, uncivilized periphery is thus reduced to a minimum, not through conquest but through cooperation.

In the Late Bronze period, the acknowledgement of territorial jurisdiction and the consequent practice of inter-state compensation has become routine. The procedure is frequently invoked following border incidents (plunder, hostile incursions, hiding of refugees or runaway slaves) and murders and robberies of foreigners (merchants, messengers).¹ Customary usages plus the political will to cooperate are sometimes sufficient for it to operate without excessive abuse, though when relations become intense and the vested interests great, it is better that the rules are explicitly

established by treaty. The provisions of such treaties can be quite detailed, for instance in the case of the search for runaway slaves:

Idrimi has to seize Pilliya's fugitives and return them to Pilliya, and Pilliya has to seize Idrimi's fugitives and return them to Idrimi. Anyone who seizes a fugitive and returns him to his master, (the owner) will pay a reward of 50 (shekels of) copper if it is a man, a reward of 100 (shekels) if it is a woman. However, if a fugitive from Pilliya enters Idrimi's land and nobody seizes him, but his own master seizes him, he need not pay a reward to anybody. And if a fugitive from Idrimi enters Pilliya's land and nobody seizes him, but his own master seizes him, he need not pay a reward to anybody. In whatever city they denounce a fugitive, the mayor with five elders will make a declaration under oath.²

If a fugitive slave, male or female, of my land flees to your land, you must seize him and return him to me; or if someone else seizes him and takes him to you, you must keep him in your prison, and whenever his owner comes forward, you must hand him over to him. If (the slave) is not to be found, you must give him (= the owner) an escort, and he may seize him (= the slave) in whatever town he is found. (In any town where) he is not found, the mayor and five elders will declare under oath: 'Your slave does not live among us, (otherwise) we will denounce him to you'. If they are unwilling to take the oath, they have to return the slave. If they do take the oath, but (eventually) he (= the owner) is able to produce his slave among them, they are considered thieves, their hands are cut off and they will pay 6,000 (shekels of) copper to the Palace.³

The presence of the victims or their representative is necessary for technical reasons. This takes place under the control of the local authorities without any derogation from the full sovereignty of the local king, who alone is entitled to decide and settle the cases. Similar procedures are applied in the case of murder:

In case a man of Karkemish is killed in Ugaritic territory: if the murderers are caught, they will compensate three times the victim's value), and they will also compensate three times the robbed objects. If the murderers are not caught, the (victim's) life will be compensated three times, but the robbed objects, as many were robbed, (only) their value will be compensated. In case a man of Ugarit is killed in Karkemish territory, the compensation is the same.⁴

In general, the procedure follows the horizontal and vertical lines of the political dispensation of the time. Horizontal contact can take place only between two 'great kings' or two 'small kings'; any oblique contact between a small king and an overlord not his own would be an infringement of the rules. One great king will ask for satisfaction from the great king exercising general authority over the territory where the incident occurred. But before and after this horizontal contact takes place, the procedure follows a process of delegation. The denunciation comes up to the great king from the family of the victim via its small king. The great king will then entrust the task of investigation to the small king of the city where the incident occurred. The latter, in his turn, will hold responsible the inhabitants of the village nearest to the scene. Now, in this pattern, the vertical moves are confined within the state. Consequently, they may present technical difficulties because the villages tend to hide fugitives and conceal the identities of any murderers.⁵ At the same time they are not affected by the concern for prestige and reciprocity (including retaliation!) so characteristic of the horizontal contacts between great kings.

In urging Pharaoh's intervention following crimes in Palestine, the distant Kassite king cannot but appeal for brotherly assistance:

My messenger Salmu, whom I sent to you, twice has his caravan been robbed. Firstly, Biryawaza robbed him, and secondly Pamahu, your own governor over a region your tributary, robbed him. My brother should take up this case. As soon as this messenger of mine speaks to the presence of my brother, Salmu should likewise speak to the presence of my brother. One should give him back his objects and one should compensate him for the losses he suffered.⁶

My merchants who travelled with Ahu-tabu, they remained in Canaan for their businesses, after Ahu-tabu continued to the presence of my brother. In the city of Hinnatuni in Canaan, Shum-Adda son of Balume and Shutatna son of Shuratum, of Akko, sent their men to kill the merchants and take their silver. I send you Azzu: ask him and he will tell you. Canaan is your land, and its kings are your servants. I was robbed in your land. Summon them, and the silver they took, let them compensate, and the people who killed my servants, kill them or compensate their blood!⁷

In both cases the responsible persons are not unknown brigands but the local authorities, and the 'plunder' is a tax so excessive as to amount to

extortion which degenerates into murder. The Babylonian king, being so far removed from the scene, can do little more than issue a reminder of the obvious consequences of a lack of justice and order: 'If you do not kill these men, they will go back and kill again either a caravan of mine or a messenger of yours, and the (traffic of) messengers between us will be interrupted.'⁸

The standard letter requesting intervention must therefore include the following: a description of the incident, emphasis upon the addressee's higher responsibility, an announcement that the messenger (or somebody else) is officially entrusted with the affair, and a formal request for punishment or compensation. The overall ethical principle is conveniently summarized by the Alashiya king: 'Let what is correct among us be done!'⁹

Equally standardized is the reply to a letter of this kind. This contains some degree of contradiction because while the responsible king has to give satisfaction (to demonstrate perfect control over his country and preserve the integrity of the system), it is a blow to 'national' prestige to have to recognize responsibility in a crime or an abuse. This standard reply is similar to those we shall see as typical in trade negotiations (Chapter 29).

The responsible king begins by stating that he is not aware of the incident in question, even though he has just received its formal denunciation. The king of Alashiya writes: 'My brother, you told me: "People of your land were together with them (= the pirates)". But I do not know, my brother, if they were with them. If people of my land are (with them), write to me and I will act as I want.'¹⁰ And the king of Hatti writes: 'How should I know if they actually executed the merchants?''¹¹

Does the Alashiya king need two official denunciations instead of just one? Or does the Hittite king have no trust in the denunciation just received from the Babylonian king? In fact, the initial reaction seems to be just a rhetorical move designed to gain sufficient time to make a decision, so that the 'official' knowledge of the dysfunction can be followed immediately by the remedy (or the sanction). In reality, both parties know that the doubts raised by the addressee will be removed by the arrival of the victim's representative, who will explain everything under oath. A routine matter already planned (or already arranged) by the aggrieved king, the sending of this representative, is again requested by the responsible king as an additional prerequisite for his intervention.

The second standard objection made by the king finding himself held accountable is a more general one: this is not about the credibility of the allegation in question but the very possibility that incidents of this kind

can take place in his country at all. The king of Alashiya is quite brief: 'You do not know the people of my land. They do not do such things!'¹² while the Hittite king is more detailed:

As to these words that you wrote to me 'My merchants have been killed in Amurru and in Ugarit', I answer: 'In the Hittite lands nobody is killed!' If the kings hear about such a thing, they seize the killer of such a person and hand him over to the brothers of the murdered man. His brothers take the monetary compensation for the murdered man and they perform the expiatory ritual of the murderer, through whose acts a life was taken. Only if the brothers do not want to accept a monetary compensation, they execute the man who has taken a life. Or, if a man who has committed a crime against the king escapes into another country and is caught there, it is not customary to execute him. Dear brother, make inquiries and they will tell you. (Now,) how could execute merchants a people who do not execute criminals?¹³

This is both a rhetorical objection stimulated by concern for national prestige and an indirect warning that the blood-revenge requested by the Babylonian king will not be authorized, though the customary compensation will be granted. At the same time, the practical negotiations (witnesses, oaths, compensation, sealed tablets) will proceed, the responsible king already having promised cooperation in his first reply. After his lengthy objections to the credibility of the murder of any merchants in Hittite lands in the letter just quoted, Hattushili concludes: 'So, send me the brothers of the killed merchant, in order that I can examine the case.',¹⁴ and after having devoted as much time to discussing a question centred on the Amurru vassal-king Benteshina, he concludes: 'Benteshina is a servant of mine; if he cursed my brother, did he not curse me too?'¹⁵

After the problems of prestige between the great kings have been resolved, the normal juridical procedures seem to proceed quite smoothly. Maximum care is taken in ascertaining exact responsibility, and a feeling of satisfaction can perhaps be read 'between the lines' when a presumed responsibility turns out to be the result of a mistake.¹⁶ But in some cases either ascertaining jurisdiction is difficult, or the capacity of the king to control the situation is doubtful.

A case of uncertain jurisdiction concerns ships in harbour: are they inside or outside the jurisdiction of the king to which the harbour belongs? In asking the Ugaritic prefect for the restitution of a person caught by the Shikalaya people 'who stay on the ships',¹⁷ the Hittite king

considers the local authorities to possess jurisdiction over the harbour where the Shikalaya ships were presumably anchored (otherwise, how could the Ugaritic prefect make any intervention?). The letter seems to present the problem as a routine matter. However, in addressing the prefect, the Hittite king mentions that 'the king your lord is young, he does not understand anything',¹⁸ so implying earlier receipt of an unsatisfactory (i.e. negative) answer. We do not know the prefect's subsequent reply. Did he consider himself as juridically responsible and thus entitled to send police onto ships anchored in his harbour?

Two similar episodes in the Wen-Amun narrative seem to point to rather complex norms. When Wen-Amun is robbed in the Dor harbour, he asks the local king for compensation or intervention but the reply is partly negative:

Had the thief belonged to my land, who came down into your ship and stole your silver, then I had repaid it from my own treasury until the thief – whatever be his name – was caught. But the thief belongs to you, he belongs to your ship! (Anyhow) spend some days here and visit me (again): I will search for him.¹⁹

Since Wen-Amun takes it upon himself to rescue his goods from the party to which they had been sold (apparently Zeker ships anchored in Byblos), the Byblos king repeatedly asks Wen-Amun to leave. He appears to regard Wen-Amun's conduct as unlawful but has no jurisdiction over him. Later on, the Zeker ships block Wen-Amun in the harbour at Byblos and ask the local king to deliver him. Again the king's reply is complex but mostly negative. He cannot, he replies, deliver Wen-Amun, who is in some way protected by the laws of hospitality, and suggests instead that the Zeker should intercept his ship when leaving the harbour.²⁰ The harbour is therefore a place of ambiguous status: not completely under the jurisdiction of the local king, but not an area where anyone can intervene freely either.

In the case of the harbours, the reason for this partial extra-territoriality is a technical one: trade might be discouraged if the royal hand weighs on them too heavily.²¹ Quite different is the problem of the half-nomadic tribes: the partial control existing over them serves no practical purpose and is just a result of the difficulty of dealing with a rather independent element within the state's territory. The king, however, has to prove that he exercises some kind of control also over the nomads, otherwise he risks getting an answer like the one Hattushili III addressed to Kadashman-Enlil II:

In regard to what my brother wrote: 'As to the fact that I stopped my messengers, I stopped my messengers because the Ahlamu are hostile', how it is that you stopped your messengers because of the Ahlamu?! My brother, is perhaps your kingdom a small one? ... In my brother's country the horses are more plentiful than straw: should I grant to your messengers 1,000 chariots in order to escort them until Tuttul, and keep the Ahlamu away?!²²

If a great king wants to be considered as such, he has to be able to provide justice and order in his own country without outside help. If the Babylonian king cannot give an adequate escort to his own messengers in his own territory, up to the border (Tuttul), this can certainly be supplied by the Hatti king. However, this will reduce Babylonia to the rank of 'small kingdom', a vassal of Hatti, which itself ensures overall order. The proposal by Hattushili is deliberately paradoxical, but the connection between rank and behaviour is well expressed.

The problem is even more serious with border incidents. If some armed groups plunder a territory and then find a refuge (or escape) beyond its borders, the king of the land providing them with sanctuary is held responsible. It is quite obvious what he is expected to do: either deliver the guilty party to the aggrieved king, or initiate the judicial procedures for compensation. A dramatic example is provided by the Aman-hatbi story:

The *ḫabiru* attacked Hazi, a city of the king my lord, but we made battle against them and we defeated them. 40 *ḫabiru* went to Aman-hatbi, and he accepted those who fled and they assembled in the city: so that Aman-hatbi (himself became virtually) a *ḫabiru*. We heard that the *ḫabiru* were staying with Aman-hatbi, and my brothers and my sons, your servants, took their chariots and went to Aman-hatbi. My brothers asked to Aman-hatbi: 'Deliver the *ḫabiru*, the enemies of the king our lord, and we will ask them, the *ḫabiru* who entered by you, whether they took the cities of the king my lord and set fire on them'. He agreed to deliver the *ḫabiru*, but (then) he took them in the night, and he fled himself to the *ḫabiru*.²³

An example of a routine judicial arrangement is provided by the Ugarit-Siyannu border incidents, as settled by the Hittite overlord:

The Siyannu people have to swear: 'We do not know the *ḫabiru* who destroyed that farm, and we are not (ourselves) the *ḫabiru* who destroyed that farm'. If the Siyannu people swear, the Ugarit people

will forfeit their claim; but if the Siyannu people escape from the oath, they have to pay a threefold compensation to the Ugarit people.²⁴

In both cases the incidents are ascribed to the *ḥabiru*, technically ‘refugees’²⁵ but sometimes (especially in the Amarna letters) simply criminals, enemies in a very derogatory sense.²⁶ Being displaced people, as well as mobile and aggressive, the *ḥabiru* are a typical case of doubtful or difficult jurisdiction.

If the responsible king is unable or unwilling to deal with the problem, he is expected at least to distance himself from the guilty parties: ‘When you want to be enemy of the Hatti king’ – so the Ahhiyawa king should say to the pirate Piyamaradu – ‘be his enemy from another country, do not be his enemy from my country’.²⁷ Somewhat similar is the attitude of the Kassite king, although the event to which he refers is probably a pure rhetorical forgery:

At the time of Kurigalzu my father, all the Canaanites wrote to him, saying: ‘Let’s go down against the border of the land (of Egypt): we will change alliance and side with you’. But my father answered so: ‘Forget to side with me: if you are enemies of the king of Egypt, my brother, side with somebody else. I will not come, and I will not plunder you (sic! = them, the Egyptians), because they are my allies’.²⁸

If the overlord with nominal responsibility fails to take action, the aggrieved king can seek justice or revenge with his own forces. But in this case it becomes evident (as we have seen with the rather banal problem of the messengers’ escort) that he is acting as *de facto* overlord of territory abandoned to disorder as a result of the indifference or impotence of the king who nevertheless remains nominally its overlord. Therefore, as an act of goodwill, an ultimatum has to be sent, even if intervention is already believed to be unavoidable. The Hittite proposal to the Assyrian king about Turira is a good example of the procedures to be followed:

The men of Turira keep raiding my territory. From over there they raid the land of Karkemish, from over here they raid the land of [...] The king of Hanigalbat used to write ‘Turira is mine, I am writing from over there’. But now, either Turira is mine, or Turira is yours, and a matter affecting Turira is no (longer) concern of the king of Hanigalbat. But would you not recognize that the (men of) Turira are raiding the country and taking booty into Turira? My subjects who flee away have likewise the habit of going up to Turira. Now, if Turira is yours, smash

it! But as to my subjects who stay in the city, do not touch their belongings. If Turira is not yours, write to me so, that I may smash it. But as to your soldiers who stay in the city, their belongings will not be touched.²⁹

Problems of rank, prestige, symmetry, are evident in all these protests. Among 'great kings' there is an evident tendency to quarrel. The aggrieved king has to prove that he is able to obtain compensation by himself; as a result, his tone is that of the ultimatum, his language that of the demand rather than of the request. For his part, the responsible king has to prove that he is neither intimidated by the tone nor convinced by the arguments. If the problem is a minor one, the technical procedure will prevail over the aggressive tones. But if the prestige involved is greater than the willingness to solve the problem, the verbal strife may be but the first step to a military confrontation.

9

Runaways and Extradition

We have already seen (Chapter 6) that some ambiguity is to be found in texts that describe a movement of borders over territory as a movement of 'settlements' across borders. This can be exploited in rhetorical and political argument. Thus a major change in the political allegiance of a large country, which, of course, could not move physically, is described as follows by the Hittite king: 'Now (the people of) Kizzuwatna are Hittite cattle, and have chosen their stable. They separated from the Hurrian and turned toward my Sun.'¹ The Hittite king is cunningly using the very same wording already used by the Hurrian king in describing the movements of the Ishuwa communities: 'Formerly, in the time of my (= the Hurrian king's) grandfather, these cities went into Hurri and settled there. It is true that afterwards they went back as fugitives to Hatti. But now the cattle have chosen their stable: they have (definitively) come into my land.'² At a superficial reading the two episodes seem similar, which is the effect the Hittite king expects. In fact, however, the Ishuwa story is a story of mountain communities and refugees really moving across a border, a case incomparably less important than the political shift of Kizzuwatna from the Hurrian to the Hittite sphere.

The ambiguity is made possible by the mobility of communities (especially pastoralists) moving in search of new settlements and better land, and by the fact that it is the inclusion of a community inside borders which is of economic importance rather than the way it came about. In the Paddatishu treaty the situation is quite clear:

If a community of the great king, with its women, its belongings, its cattle, its sheep-and-goats, moves and enters into Kizzuwatna, Paddatishu shall seize and give them back to the great king. And if a community of Paddatishu, with its women, its belongings, its cattle, its

sheep-and-goats moves and enters into Hatti, the great king shall seize and give them back to Paddatishu.³

In the propaganda of a centralized perspective such movements are presented according to the paternalistic 'ideology of life' (Chapter 25) as a generous granting of victuals by the inner country to foreigners who otherwise could not survive. In this perspective, foreigners can be accepted so long as they provide the necessary submission. Contrast the two following examples:

We completed the crossing of the Shasu from Edom, through the fortress of Merneptah-hotep-her-Ma'at in Soko, toward the pools of Per-Amun in Soko, in order to let them live and to let their herds live in the land of His Majesty the good Sun of every country.⁴

Some foreigners, who did not know how to survive, came in flight from their lands, hungry, compelled to live as the game in the desert.⁵

The paternalistic attitude is content with an orderly, administered transfer of people. However, if the chaotic features of the outer world risk getting the upper hand, the physical elimination of the hungry immigrants is unavoidable.

In the symmetrical view no such connotations are present: people on both sides of the border are regarded as equally human and alike in culture. More particularly, they are regarded as equally exploitable for economic purposes, any incoming foreigner being seen as a positive addition to the resources of the state. But, as usual, some accommodation is necessary in a multicentred political world because everyone likes to receive refugees but dislikes losing them to neighbouring countries. On a purely statistical calculation, in the long run, the gains (incoming refugees) and losses (outgoing refugees) cancel themselves out, but the risk of disruption remains uncompensated. Political disruption could in fact follow, if neighbouring states host political adversaries. Economic disruption could follow if insolvent debtors – who were usually enslaved – are allowed to escape over the borders. Mutual agreement to refuse entry to refugees, therefore, means no real loss and a clear gain in socio-political control of the state.⁶

In the parithetical agreements typical of a balanced relationship, the juridical norm which emerges is that it is wrong to accept refugees and right to give them back. The Alalah and Hatti-Kizzuwatna treaties already quoted (Chapter 8) provide the best documentation on the formalization of this

mutual agreement to forgo immediate advantage in the interests of a higher stability. However, in the absence of precise agreements between states, which tends to be the result of an imbalance of power, the operative principle of interest is that it is advantageous to accept refugees, disadvantageous to give them back. Not surprisingly, the stronger power is inclined to enjoy their advantages. In the Hittite vassal treaties the tendency is to force the small king to surrender refugees belonging to the Hittite great king but not for the latter to return the favour.⁷ In one and the same document – the memorandum against Madduwatta – the Hittite king is permitted to give a warm reception to the runaway Madduwatta whereas Madduwatta itself is denied the advantages of welcoming refugees.⁸

This different treatment raises problems of a moral order because extradited refugees could suffer punishment on their return, perhaps even death. But the moral judgements made do not avoid contradictions, reflecting as they do the interests of those who formulate them. If the Hittite king does not want to surrender refugees he proclaims it to be an absolute ethical norm that 'to send back a refugee from the Hatti land is not just'.⁹ If, on the other hand, he is demanding the return of refugees, he ridicules and rejects the same norm: 'Perhaps it is not just to send back a refugee? Did we perhaps set at the feet of the Weather-god something like "A refugee will never be sent back"?'¹⁰ This way of arguing is particularly weak, since the unwritten customary rule (connected with the rules of hospitality) emphasizes the duty of protecting the refugee and this is obviously inconsistent with an insistence on the right to his extradition. A written document is necessary if an agreement has been made to the contrary, as is the case with Late Bronze treaties including extradition clauses.

Even in the case of a written agreement, however, moral concern for the fate of extradited refugees can find a place in some clauses. In the treaty quoted above it is stated that an artisan or a peasant will be extradited but not so a nobleman.¹¹ The class discrimination is evident: only 'peers' can be regarded as inviolable guests. Nevertheless, this clause also reflects the fact that an extradited commoner will simply lose his freedom again; on the other hand, an extradited nobleman, more likely to be seen as a 'political' refugee, will probably be executed. In the Ramesses–Hattushili treaty the distinction is kept between low-status and political refugees. To be sure, both categories are to be extradited in this case but special clauses are added in order to ensure that members of neither of them (including their relatives) will be killed or mutilated.¹²

Notice that the Ramesses–Hattushili treaty, which is so clearly concerned with the presence in Egypt of the former Hatti King, Urhi-

Teshub, states the rules for reciprocal extradition but makes no mention of the former king himself. Urhi-Teshub is to remain in Egypt, protected by the humanitarian rules of hospitality as well as by the impossibility for Hattushili of physically eliminating his predecessor without raising major problems of 'justice'. Hattushili's purpose, however, was not to get back Urhi-Teshub (who had been exiled rather than 'punished') but to neutralize him. He achieved this by binding Ramesses by treaty to make no political use of the former Hatti king's presence in Egypt.

In one case the fate of refugees is decided not according to the interests either of the king who claims them or the one who temporarily holds them but by the free will of the refugees themselves:

A large number of deportees went out of my country, and my brother took away from me 7,000 deportees. A representative of mine will come: let my brother question the chieftains, since some of them were brought away by force. A representative of my brother and my representative will be there. If a chieftain says 'I came here to escape', he will remain there; but if he says 'I was obliged by force', he will come back here.¹³

However, this concern for the will of the people involved is an exception, which should be understood in the frame of a complex political strategy. In a hierarchical society in which everybody 'belongs' to somebody else, the fate of refugees is generally dictated by the interests of their owners. This is especially true for runaway slaves: not only are the procedures for delivery formalized but the amount of the reward to be paid is specified as well.¹⁴ This is a long way from any concern for moral judgement or rules of hospitality. As for 'political' refugees, they are used as an item of exchange between two kings, both concerned with their own strategy. The refugee is not protected by his present circumstances but by past events or future possibilities. The past is relevant when the refugee is protected by his host in retaliation for previous injuries suffered at the hands of the king claiming ownership, the symmetry leading to a negative reciprocity perfectly conceived and expressed in the texts:

Tette, a servant of mine, wrote to Arma: 'Send troops and horses from Egypt, I will move and come to Egypt'. He sent troops and horses from Egypt, and Tette moved and went to Egypt. I wrote to Arma: 'Since Tette was my servant, why did you send troops and horses to bring him away? Give him back to me!' But he did not give me back Tette, and he did not even answer. Later on Zirtaya, his servant, wrote to me: 'Send

troops and horses, I will move and come to Hatti'. I sent troops and horses to bring Zirtaya in Hatti, and Arma wrote to me: 'Since Zirtaya is my servant, give him back to me!' But I replied: 'Why did you not give Tette back to me?' Arma kept silent, he could not reply anything.¹⁵

The refugee is even better protected by the possibility that he will prove useful in the future, especially if the king providing him with temporary shelter can arrange his return and use him as a vehicle for his own influence in the refugee's country. At the material level there may seem to be no difference between the condition of a *ḫabiru* 'just arrived this very year from the land of Akkad' and delivering himself in perpetual servitude to a wealthy landowner of Nuzi,¹⁶ and the condition of prince Shattiwaza who kneels down as a suppliant at Shuppiluliuma's feet 'with only the cloth he was wearing'.¹⁷ But unlike the *ḫabiru*, Shattiwaza is protected by Shuppiluliuma's designs on Mitanni: the Hittite king is (so to speak) looking for someone to protect in order eventually to transfer and enlarge this personal 'protection' into a 'protectorate' over the whole kingdom. Shattiwaza has the prerequisites of a political pawn: he belongs to the royal family and he arrived with the minimal heroic paraphernalia so typical of the time – three chariots, two Hurrians and two followers.

The same text narrates the contrasting fate of another Mitannian refugee, Aki-Teshub, who with 200 chariots had fled to Babylon. However, the Babylonian king seized the chariots and killed Aki-Teshub and his charioteers.¹⁸ Aki-Teshub was probably as likely a candidate for a political use as Shattiwaza; he also appears to have been more powerful. Unfortunately for him, he chose the wrong direction in which to flee. Hatti was interested in welcoming political refugees from Assyrian-backed Mitanni but, at least at that time, Babylon was not. Aki-Teshub arrived in Babylon when the negotiations for the marriage of the Babylonian king with an Assyrian princess were about to start – so that his fate was only a minor consequence of the attempt by the Assyrian king to establish his influence on Babylonia.

10

Messengers and ‘Ambassadors’

The obvious medium of communication between distant kings is the letter that a messenger delivers and, if necessary, explains. In the Late Bronze period, the complementarity of the spoken and written message is much more strict than that to which we are accustomed, the letter actually keeping the form of a spoken message.¹ Moreover its delivery is a rather complicated affair, for the king cannot read and is often ignorant of Babylonian, the ‘diplomatic language’ of the period. As a result, he needs the assistance of scribes and interpreters, and the messenger himself is expected to help in ‘reading’ the message in such a way as to convey its ‘authentic’ meaning. More importantly, since a dialogue at so remote a distance would take years to complete if reliance were to be placed solely on the seasonal rhythm of written messages, the messenger has other functions. He must also answer questions, add explanations and disclose the full intentions of the sender; in short, he must elaborate on all of those matters that could not have been put into writing. This being the case, it is of course possible that a messenger might misrepresent the intentions of his king, and this is openly admitted:

In regard to a tablet which I send you, a tablet upon which words have been set down, and (= as compared to) the words of the messenger, which he speaks orally in response to you: if the words of the messenger are in agreement with the words of the tablet, trust the messenger, o Shunashura. But if the words of the messenger are not in agreement with the words of the tablet, you, Shunashura, shall not trust the messenger and shall not take to heart the evil content of his report.²

Of course, the role and rank of the messenger vary with the message he carries, although the terms for ‘messenger’ (Babylonian *mār šipri*, Egyptian *wḫwtj*) are always the same. Routine messages and administrative orders

are delivered by simple couriers who have no responsibility and no knowledge of the content of the letters which they are charged simply with delivering. At a higher level, the term 'messenger' is applied to the Egyptian officers who lead armed contingents on the yearly tours to collect tribute,³ or on expeditions to foreign mines or forests.⁴ In these cases, the message to be delivered to the local chiefs is but a part of the messenger's responsibilities: he is both a proper officer at the head of some hundred soldiers and a 'caravan leader' carrying back substantial quantities of merchandise. Such a person is described as a 'messenger' in order to emphasize his position as a representative of his king, a sort of 'extended arm' (and voice) of the sovereign who – though remaining in his palace – is thereby able to reach the remotest countries.

Genuine diplomatic messages are entrusted to people of rank, high palace officials or relatives of the king. Such people are well acquainted with the problems under discussion and thus capable of adding explanations and even negotiating agreements. For instance, when Aziru, the double-dealing king of Amurru, receives messengers from Egypt and Hatti, it is clear that they have to discuss with him his future allegiance to either one or the other of their two sovereigns.⁵ The clearest case of a messenger given complete *carte blanche* by his king is provided by an Assyrian letter (to be fully discussed in Chapter 16) describing a negotiation with the Hittites.⁶ The Hittite messenger arrives with both a 'letter of peace' and a 'letter of war/hostility', and can decide – following the issue of the oral exchanges – which letter will be officially delivered to the Assyrian king. This procedure is criticized by the Assyrian king in his highly biased report on the affair but it could not have been that unusual.

The range of discretion left to messengers is especially wide for the most important and delicate negotiations: those concerning inter-dynastic marriages (Chapter 30). In such cases, the letter is just the starting point for complex discussions entrusted to messengers who, really, are genuine ambassadors. Messengers whose rank and abilities are not up to delicate tasks are a source of mistakes – as in the case of the Babylonian envoys of low rank who reported on the actual condition of the Babylonian princess⁷ – and receive well-deserved reprimands. On the other hand, good negotiators (correct, loyal, polite, efficient) who have arrived at the end of long, difficult and successful undertakings are openly praised and rewarded with substantial gifts – not least by the kings with whom they have been negotiating:

Mane, my brother's messenger, and Hane, my brother's interpreter, I have exalted like gods. I have given them many presents and treated

them very kindly, for their behavior was excellent. In everything about them, I have never seen men with such an appearance. May my gods and the gods of my brother protect them!⁸

Messengers who have proved reliable in the past can also be requested on further occasions.

The task of messengers, however, is neither easy nor generally rewarding. The first problem, of course, is the journey itself, a dangerous affair. This is especially true for couriers who have to travel alone through remote areas and who, in consequence, run the risk of being attacked by brigands or nomads. The fate of the Egyptian messenger abroad becomes stereotyped: 'The courier goes out to a foreign country, after he has made over his property to his children, being afraid of lions and Asiatics.'⁹ But the crossing of the steppe lands of inner Syria and upper Mesopotamia is not easy either: messengers require protection from guides belonging to the very same nomadic tribes (Suteans and Ahlamu) which threaten their passage.¹⁰

A courier who brings no precious gifts to be delivered with the letter can proceed in relative safety. His king gives him a sort of 'diplomatic passport', the content of which we know from a Mitannian exemplar:

To the kings of Canaan, servants of my brother, thus (says) the king. I herewith send Akiya, my messenger, to speed posthaste to the king of Egypt, my brother. No one is to hold him up. Provide him with safe entry into Egypt and hand him over to the fortress commander of Egypt. Let him go on immediately! He is not bringing with him any present.¹¹

The courier's 'diplomatic passport' is of no use against brigands but it can at least prevent him from being held up by the local kinglets. Of course, if he is carrying a politically sensitive message across the territory of a 'third' great king, he can be intercepted: Kamose intercepted a Hyksos messenger to Kush,¹² and Tukulti-Ninurta intercepted a Babylonian merchant-messenger who was probably travelling to Hatti.¹³ In both cases the content of the letter signified hostile intent to the 'third' great king, whose discovery of it provoked major political reactions.

Completely different is the problem of safety for messengers who carry gifts and other merchandise, or for merchants to whom the king entrusts official letters (a practice known to be followed by Babylon and Alashiya). In these cases the risk of robberies is too high (Chapter 8) and the messenger cannot travel alone. He needs various chariots and an escort – in short, a small caravan. However, the bigger the caravan, the bigger the

risk of attack, the bigger in consequence the escort needed – and the slower the journey. It is for this reason that the Amarna letters distinguish couriers (*kallû*), who travel alone and as fast as possible, from caravans, which have to follow their own slow rhythm.

Whether they travel alone or in caravans, the prestige and interest of the king are both at stake in the ability of his messengers to reach the most remote destinations in safety. The Pharaoh includes among his boasts statements of the kind: 'I imposed the fear of mine until the borders of Asia, so that my messengers are not detained', or 'my messengers are not repulsed through all the land of Fenkhu'.¹⁴ And we have already seen (Chapter 8) the contest for prestige between the Hittite and Babylonian kings over the latter's capacity to send messengers up to the Hittite border. This episode makes us well understand the desire of potential messengers to avoid this assignment. Here is an Ugaritic nobleman who was able to get a formal exemption: 'Bin-Yasuba and his sons, forever, they have to provide no service at all to the Palace or to the Palace manager, as (regards) caravans to Egypt and to Hatti, and (service) of horse-rider.'¹⁵

When the messenger arrives at his destination, his problems are still not over. It is true that, whatever the content of his message and the climate of the relationship, he is welcomed and protected by the rules of hospitality, which obviously have their attractive aspect. He is lodged and fed, and the king in person invites him to official feasts and ceremonies.¹⁶ Furthermore, the safety of the messenger is personally guaranteed by the lord (in this case the king), who has accepted him as a guest in his house. He is even given gifts at the moment of his departure: 'The messenger of the king of Akko is honored more than my messenger – protests Rib-Adda – for they furnished him with a horse!'¹⁷ But it is his departure which presents the difficulty, for, according to the same laws of hospitality, the guest cannot leave at his own discretion but has to wait for the host's consent.

Over the problem of consent to the messenger's departure, the political and material interests of the two kings argue in opposite directions. Material interest favours a quick turnaround, with no time lost in useless detentions. This is the point of view of the Assyrian king:

The messengers, why should they let them wait before leaving, and even die before leaving? In case there is an advantage for the king, that they wait before leaving, let them wait and even die before leaving, (since) there is an advantage to the king. But otherwise, why should they die before leaving? The messengers that we use to entrust to each other's hands, they are (just) messengers! Will they let them survive, or will they let them die before leaving?¹⁸

But notice that the Assyrian king is a newcomer to the game, and basically motivated by commercial rather than political interests; nevertheless, even he admits the possibility that the other king's decision to detain the messengers is not just whimsical. Under normal circumstances, a faster turnaround at the end of each journey means more journeys and more journeys means more gifts, although such a material interest is better disguised under the noble concern for news about the interlocutor's health. Among kings separated by large distances, annual trips seem to be accepted as a reasonable norm.¹⁹

However, as we have intimated, the normal pattern may be altered by the detention of the messenger, and this is in fact a frequent occurrence. It is done in order to exert pressure on his king:

My brother, I would like to send back your messenger promptly, but as long as my brother detains my messenger, I detain these men here. As soon as he lets my messengers go and present their report to me, I will let Mane go and I will send Keliya back to my brother as before. As long as my brother detains my messengers, I will do as I have planned.²⁰

In a virtually endless feud, every king is protesting at the detention of his own messengers while simultaneously detaining the messengers of his 'brothers' in retaliation. Since we happen to know such stories from letters which were actually delivered while the previous messenger was detained, it is evident that communication went on all the same, probably using couriers of lesser rank whose detention would have provided less leverage. Of course, detaining a messenger is a message in itself, a significant move in a complicated game. In the same breath it is approved as a routine tactic in which the detained messengers are well treated, and condemned as a kind of 'cheating' in which innocent persons are unduly exploited: 'What are messengers? Are they birds, that can fly and go away?'²¹

We might assume that the detention of a messenger was generally resolved by the next journey in the annual cycle, so that he would remain abroad for two years instead of one. But sometimes the messenger had to remain longer, even much longer. The negotiation might remain blocked or the relationship change, the kings might forget him, he himself might have found that life in his new state was not too bad after all. We learn of messengers detained until their death. When the Egyptian messenger Wen-Amun protests that he has been detained for too long, the king of Byblos replies: 'Indeed, I have not done to you what was done to the envoys of Khaemwese, after they had spent seventeen years in this land. They died on the spot!'²²

Messengers detained in foreign palaces did not spend their time alone; they were in good company. There might be political refugees, as we have noted in Chapter 9, together with foreign artists and doctors lent for a while but detained for a long time, even forever. We learn that of two Babylonian doctors in Hatti, one died of natural causes while the other seems to have no intention of returning; he owns a fine house, has a wife who is related to the king, and is free to leave whenever he wants. It is clear that royal palaces obtain both prestige and material advantage by filling their rooms with foreigners: refugees are hosted to hatch political plots (Chapter 9), craftsmen to exploit their skills, and messengers to exert pressure on a royal interlocutor. Messengers are kept longer than strictly necessary for the technical performance of their task. But great kings, while concerned about the speed of their journeys when it is a matter of trade, seem not to be interested in negotiations taking place ‘in real time’ when it is a matter of politics. After all, the ultimate aim of political negotiations is to preserve contact, not to solve a problem.

Part II

War and Alliance

11

The One against Many

In the centralized worldview the inner country is surrounded by inferior peoples and empty lands, objects of easy conquest and economic exploitation. At the same time, however, they are a serious source of anxiety. This is not just because of their barbarism but because of their immense numbers, great variety and ability to unite. With these strengths, they seem capable of challenging or even overwhelming the cosmic core, despite its qualitative superiority.

The characteristic Assyrian feeling of being surrounded by pressing hostile forces is best expressed in a prayer of Tukulti-Ninurta I:

‘The (foreign) lands of one accord have surrounded your city Ashur with a noose of evil, all of them have assembled to hate the shepherd whom you named, who administers your peoples. All regions of the earth, for which you had produced benevolent assistance, held you in contempt, and though you extended your protection to them, they rebuffed your land. The king for whom you held goodwill made sure to disobey you, and even those whom you treated well unsheathed their weapons (against you). The battlefield’s task is ever in full readiness against your city Ashur, all the onrushings of a flood are mustered against it. Your enemies and foes are glowering at your standing place, they have concerted to plunder your country, Assyria, by treachery. The (foreign) lands crave night and day for the destruction of your wondrous sights, everywhere they seek to overthrow your cities.’¹

This siege complex is a justification for the military activity of Tukulti-Ninurta in all surrounding countries where Assyrian ‘protection’ is refused,² though it is obviously based on a false picture. In fact, the

mountain tribes of the Zagros and the Tur 'Abdin were threatened by Assyrian aggressiveness much more than the other way round.

A similar view, but shaped as a historical memory rather than a worry for the future, is provided by Hattushili III, in a text referring to the period before Shuppiluliuma:

In earlier days the lands of Hatti were sacked by the enemies. The Kashka enemy came and sacked Hatti and made Nenasha his border. From the side of the Lower Country the Arzawa enemy came, he too sacked Hatti and made Tuwanuwa and Uda his border. From afar, the Araunna enemy came and sacked all the Gashiya land. From afar, the Azzi enemy came and sacked all the Upper Countries and made Shamuha his border. The Ishuwa enemy came and sacked the Tegarama land. From afar, the Armatana enemy came and he too sacked Hatti, and made the city of Kizzuwatna his border.³

And we can quote in the same vein even the small Syro-Palestinian kings of the Amarna period, who express their panic at being threatened from all directions: 'I know that all the enemies are assembled in order to fall against me. What can I do in my isolation?'; 'Zimrida of Sidon, Aziru the traitor of the king, and the men of Arwad have sworn and renewed their oath among them, and have assembled their ships and their chariots and their soldiers to conquer Tyre, the servant of the king'; 'Let my lord know that 30 cities have begun hostilities against me, and I am alone!'⁴ Such passages contain the main features of the siege complex: the enemies are numerous, they are diversified, but they occasionally bond together (by oath or just *de facto*) in order to conquer the inner city or country, where the subject is 'alone'.⁵

The small and fearful Syro-Palestinian kinglets lament their isolation: it makes them vulnerable and therefore, they say, they must have aid from Pharaoh. In the ideology of the Pharaoh himself, however, isolation is welcomed because the contrast between this and his numberless enemies makes it possible to strike a 'heroic' pose. Though alone, Pharaoh is able to defeat all enemies:

He is a king who fights alone, without a multitude behind him. He is more effective than millions of soldiers.

A raging one, stretching out his right arm, entering into the fray and slaying hundred-thousands in their places before his horses, for he regards the thick of the throng as grasshoppers, beaten, worn down

and pulverized like flour; strong of horns, relying upon his own might, so that millions and myriads are despised before him.⁶

On the one side there is Pharaoh alone, with his instruments of war, the chariot and the bow, both endowed with high symbolic value.⁷ On the other side there is the enemy coalition, countless but inferior, foredoomed to defeat.⁸ Pharaoh just charges straight at the ranks of the enemy and defeats its multitudes.

The literary motif of the enemy coalition is applied to different situations. These extend from the '330 chiefs, each one with his army' opposing Tuthmosis III in his first campaign, to the composition of the Hittite army at the battle of Qadesh and the Libyan and Sea Peoples' invasions at the time of Ramesses III. The historicity of such coalitions has in general been too readily accepted, insufficient weight having been given to the ideological dimension. In principle, every case must be evaluated critically, but as soon as the ideological nature of the position is pointed out, it becomes evident that the historical base in the various episodes is largely disguised. The battle of Qadesh was in fact fought between two armies of comparable size; yet in the account of Ramesses II, by emphasizing the composite character of the Hittite army and the abandonment of the king by the Egyptian troops, it becomes an encounter of Pharaoh alone against a multitude (Chapter 17). All the significant details are carefully noted,⁹ from the fearful conduct of the Hittite king (who, unlike Ramesses, hides himself behind his troops), to the fact that the enemy troops had to be hired for money and the minor detail that the Hittite chariots contained three soldiers instead of the 'normal/fair' number of two. Everything is highlighted which shows how the qualitative superiority of Pharaoh was able to overcome the quantitative superiority of the cowardly, treacherous and altogether inferior enemy:

The wretched fallen one of Hatti was come and had collected together all the foreign countries as far as the end of the sea: the entire land of Hatti was come, that of Naharina likewise, that of Arzawa, Dardana, Kashka, Masha, Pidasha, Arawanna, Karkisha, Lukka, Kizzuwatna, Karkemish, Ugarit, Qode, the entire land of Nuhasha, Qadesh. He left no foreign country not to bring it of every distant land, their chiefs were with him, every man with his infantry and their chariots exceedingly many, without limit of the like of them. They covered mountains and valleys and they were like the locusts by reason of their multitude. He left no silver in his hand, he stripped it of all its

possessions and gave them to all the foreign countries in order to bring them with him to fight.¹⁰

The very political structure of the Hittite empire, with its autonomous entities and vassal kingdoms, becomes a feature of chaos, an excuse for multiplying the ranks of the enemy, an opportunity to imply that in total size it was larger than the Egyptian army. Of course, this army also had its various internal divisions and auxiliary corps but these are only mentioned (in the case of the Na'arina troops) in pursuit of the inner polemic against the army itself.

In the celebrative programme (built up of the various iconic and textual presentations of the battle on the main Egyptian temples) the motif of Pharaoh alone destroying the entire Hittite army became the pivotal point of the entire complex. And since the realization of the programme lasted many years, and came to overlap the period of peace and treaty-agreement with the Hittites,¹¹ its clear anti-Hittite character disturbed Hattushili. When the Hittite king became acquainted with the content of Ramesses' celebrations of Qadesh, he decided to protest. He complained that the anti-Hittite (even humiliating) presentation of events was contrary to the new spirit of friendship and brotherhood, and in particular inquired ironically if Ramesses really was alone in his fight and, if so, what had happened to the Egyptian armies. Ramesses' reply reaffirms his loyalty to the treaty but continues to defend the 'truth' of his own view of the battle of Qadesh.¹²

Almost one century later, the texts of Ramesses III are especially insistent on the contrast between the enemy coalition threatening the borders of Egypt and the heroic conduct of Pharaoh who attacks them 'alone'.¹³ At that time, defence of the borders against foreign pressure was in fact a source of major concern for the Egyptian population, which welcomed with relief the averted danger. The tribal league of the Libyans which seems likely and the 'confederation' of the Sea Peoples¹⁴ which does not are similarly described: 'The Tehenu are in motion: they are making a conspiracy. They are gathered and assembled without number, consisting of Rebu, Seped and Meshwesh lands assembled to advance themselves, to aggrandize themselves against Egypt'; 'As for the foreign countries, they made a conspiracy in their islands ... Their confederation was the Peleset, Zeker, Shekelesh, Denen and Weshesh lands united.'¹⁵ The idea of a coordinated, large-scale invasion, with forces arriving at the Egyptian frontier simultaneously by land (on wagons dragged by oxen) and sea (on fast warships), is widely accepted in the modern literature on the Sea Peoples.¹⁶ Though quite improbable, and contradicted by the documents from Ugarit,¹⁷ it is obviously functional to pharaonic

propaganda. A number of small episodes were probably joined together in order to build up artfully a 'battle' that as such never took place but had to be evoked for the sake of tradition and the propaganda celebration – even for the sake of symmetry (in the monumental representation) with the real and decisive battle won against the Libyans.

In all of these and similar cases, the implication is that the ratio of forces (one against the many) is unfair; in a fair encounter the ratio would be one enemy country against ours. But though the enemy states band together, the inferiority of which this reveals awareness is such that they cannot prevail against the heroic king of the inner country. In the middle-Assyrian royal inscriptions, the enemies actually have to band together in order to constitute a reasonable challenge.¹⁸ The reaction to this by the victorious king of Assyria will be to separate and disperse their forces, as summarized by such royal epithets as 'disperser of the forces of the land of the Subarians in their entirety'.¹⁹ Being part of the chaotic periphery, the enemies are by their very nature fragmented, and their attempt to unite is haphazard and hostile in intent, the only correct unity being with 'us', and under 'our' control.

Beyond the battlefield as well, in their very political structures, the enemy lands are never compact: they are mosaic-like assemblages of minor units. 'This country (= rebel Nubia) was divided into three parts', states Tuthmosis II (involuntarily echoed by Julius Caesar!).²⁰ Likewise the Kashka enemies against whom Shuppiluliuma is fighting are always 'all of them', which implies multiplicity, and are more specifically built up of different tribal units: 'The Kashka enemy that my father met inside this country consisted of twelve tribes';²¹ 'Furthermore again he met six tribes in Huwana and he slew these too, and the enemy troops died in multitude. And still another seven tribes he met in Ni[...] and in Shapparanda and slew them, and the enemy troops died in multitude'.²²

The motif 'One against Many', leaving aside the pharaonic boasts, is mainly found in the variant 'Few against Many'. While acknowledging the role of the army (so that the king is not fighting alone), the contrast of the small number of brave soldiers of the inner country with the mass of enemy troops follows the usual ideological lines. In the case of Hattushili (not yet king, but chief of the army), the boast concerning victories won against heavy odds is linked to a polemic against Muwatalli: 'My brother Muwatalli sent me (against the Kashka 'all of them') but gave me few troops ... The (enemies') horses were 800 teams and the foot-soldiers were numberless; my brother Muwatalli sent me and gave me (only) 120 teams of horses, and I had not even one foot-soldier'.²³ Thanks to the aid of Ishtar, Hattushili will, of course, prevail.

On the other hand, the Assyrian king, who naturally has at his disposal all the soldiers he wants, voluntarily renounces some of them to demonstrate that only a few are sufficient to defeat a numberless but inferior enemy:

Afterwards, the Gutians, whose number, like the stars in the sky, nobody knows, skilled in murder, rebelliously turned against me and committed hostilities ... I left my army's camp, taking one third of my best chariotry, and drove (them) into the battle against them ... I poured out the lives of their extensive troops like water.²⁴

The heroic enterprise of the king (alone, or with a few followers) covers a wide range of situations. At one extreme we find occasional but significant acts of personal valour, as in an episode related by Amenophis II:

His Majesty went on horse to Hashabu, alone, with no fellow. He came back shortly, and he brought 16 *maryannu*, alive and tied at the sides of his chariot.²⁵

or the other referring to Shuppiluliuma:

In the morning my father drove down from Tiwanzana into the country, (while) in the rear his charioteers and six teams of horses were supporting him. And as my father was driving, he came upon that whole enemy at once, and my father engaged him in battle. The gods helped my father ... and he smote that enemy.²⁶

The minimal instrument for this kind of enterprise is the social/military symbol of the time, the chariot. This motif is also connected with another one, that of the young hero who, relying on his own forces plus chariot and chariot-driver, goes on to the conquest of a kingdom – an image attested from Egypt, Syria, Anatolia, to Urartu and Persia, since the fifteenth century BC down to the times of Herodotus.²⁷

At the other extreme there is the image of the Pharaoh defending the border alone against hostile invaders; this is a highly symbolic image, to be validated again and again by Pharaoh's valour on the battlefield. He is typically 'a bronze wall'²⁸ (or fortress, shield and so on), a metaphor already in use in the Middle Kingdom, and often repeated during the New Kingdom. Tuthmosis III is 'a fortress for his army, a bronze wall'; Amenophis II is 'a great wall for Egypt, the protection of his army'; Sethos I is 'a great bronze wall, protecting his army'; Ramesses II is 'a solid wall

protecting his soldiers, their shield on the battle day'; and Ramesses III is 'the wall that protects Egypt'.²⁹ The boast by Ramesses III that 'I have rescued my infantry, I have protected the chariotry, and my arms have covered the people over',³⁰ highlights what was already clear from the other examples. This is that Pharaoh does not even use his army to protect the country; on the contrary, it is he who is protecting the army!

To give themselves more courage, such slogans were shouted by the soldiers on the battlefield, as implied by the reproach of Ramesses II to his fearful soldiers: 'did you not know, in your hearts, that I am your wall of bronze?'³¹ They were also well known to the Syro-Palestinian kinglets, as shown by Abi-Milki's use of the epithet 'bronze wall' for the Pharaoh,³² in a letter not devoid of the usual worries over security and protection.

With Pharaoh sleepless and vigilant, the border is secure: the hostile forces will never prevail, the inner country will never be submerged in the frightful chaos. The king's watch is utterly reliable, so everybody else can sleep in a paradise-like atmosphere of peace and security:

Sit happily down and talk, or walk out on your way, there is no fear in the heart of the people. The strongholds are left to themselves and the wells are opened. The messengers skirt the battlements of the walls, shaded from the sun, until the watchmen wake. The soldiers are sleeping, and the border scouts are in the field at their own desire. The herds of the fields are left as cattle sent forth, without herdsmen, crossing the fullness of the stream. There is no uplifting of a shout in the night: 'Stop! Behold, one comes, one comes with the speech of strangers!' One comes and goes with singing, and there is no lamentation of mourning people. The towns are settled again anew; as for the one who plows his harvest, he shall eat it.³³

12

War as Elimination of the Rebels

Before leaving for war, the army has to be reassured that the enemy is really inferior, lacking any ability to resist and launch a counter-attack. For magical purposes, the Egyptians broke clay figurines representing their enemies and inscribed with their names.¹ The Hittites performed various rituals, mostly based upon magical procedures:

They divide the young men into two halves, and they name them: one half they call 'men of Hatti' and the other half they call 'men of Masha'. The men of Hatti have bronze weapons, the men of Masha have reed weapons. They fight together and the men of Hatti win.²

We made two figurines, one of cedar and one of clay. On the one of cedar we placed the name of the enemy of His Majesty, and on the one of clay we put the name of Hishmi-Sharruma.³

Take from them (= the enemies) masculinity, prowess, robust health, swords, battle-axes, bows, arrows, daggers! And bring them to Hatti! Place in their hands the spindle and mirror of a woman! Dress them as women! Put on their (heads) the *kureššar* (headgear for women)! And take away from them your favour!⁴

Deprived of their gods, weapons and valour, their enemies now fitted perfectly the idea of an inferior entity, whose impotence is paralleled by their wickedness and foolish insubordination.

Besides being reassured about their military superiority, our soldiers also have to be reassured about the moral correctness of their actions. The 'guilt complex', always connected with the act of killing, has to be appeased. This is achieved by spreading the conviction that the enemies

are evil and sinful, and thus the authors of their own punishment and annihilation.⁵

The basic idea is that hostilities have been started by the enemies. The Hittites actually organize law-suits against the enemy peoples and their gods, charging that they have begun hostilities against the peaceful and innocent Hittites.⁶ Only after this ritual has been accomplished do the Hittites cross the border, physically invading the country of the nominal invaders, physically attacking the persons of the nominal attackers.

Egyptian ideology is similar: the enemies are 'rebels' who are responsible for starting hostilities either by some precise act of aggression or simply by refusing to acknowledge the overlordship of the sovereign of the central country. In the phraseology of the Egyptian inscriptions, the enemies are 'rebels' by definition⁷ – even if they do not commit any specific rebellion – just because they do not submit or might 'conceive' or 'plot' a rebellion. In fact, it is possible to be an enemy/rebel even for people who 'do not know Egypt', and the most paradoxical boast of the king is to have been able to discover rebels in lands so distant that nobody previously suspected their existence.⁸

The standard Egyptian justification for a military expedition is the elimination of rebels: 'His Majesty sent a numerous army to Nubia ... in order to overthrow all those who were rebels against His Majesty and hostile to the lord of both lands.'⁹ This justification is usually offered in response to the announcement that the start (or plotting) of a foreign rebellion has been brought to Pharaoh's attention. This serves to emphasize that the time-gap between rebellion and punishment is minimal: as soon as Pharaoh knows, he intervenes.¹⁰

In any case, the idea that the responsibility for the punishment and extermination is to be credited to the enemy/rebel is generally expressed. Either he attacks us first: 'One came to inform His Majesty: "Kush has come up to the land of Wawat, starting a rebellion against Egypt: he gathers with him all the vagrants and rebels of other lands"';¹¹ or he is just 'planning' to attack – so deserving the 'pre-emptive retaliation' of the threatened inner country: 'One came to inform His Majesty: "The miserable vanquished Kush has planned in his heart to rebel"'.¹² In any case the reaction is the same: an expedition against the rebels to restore peace and confirm Egyptian dominion.

In the middle-Assyrian royal inscriptions the evaluation of the enemies as rebels is more specific from the juridical point of view. The act of 'opposing', 'being an enemy' (*nakāru*) and 'engaging in hostilities' against Assyria becomes a true 'rebellion' (*nabalkutu*) if the enemy, already acknowledging submission and bound by a loyalty oath, breaks that

oath.¹³ Or else the vassal can 'revolt/transgress' by interrupting the delivery of tribute, also required by a previous oath.¹⁴ And also in middle-Assyrian texts we find the enemy represented as plotting 'in his heart' to attack the central country, and so deserving pre-emptive retaliation.¹⁵

There are two standard ways to end a rebellion: force the rebels to submit (Chapter 14) or physically eliminate them. However, the difference is mainly one of emphasis, since whatever happens the common people are forced to submit and deaths are inevitable (soldiers in battle, the leaders guilty of rebellion). Where the emphasis falls seems to be related mainly to the degree of danger actually run by the inner country. Thus an expedition prompted by a minor threat will tend to focus on submission and be largely demonstrative in character and purpose. By contrast, a major security threat requires more drastic measures. It is no accident that the most obsessive insistence on extermination is to be found in the texts of Ramesses III apropos the threatened Libyan invasion of Egypt. This constituted a serious peril and source of fear for the inner population. As a result we read that 'Their root is cut off; they do not exist, in a single case. Their feet have ceased to tread Egypt forever'; 'As for those who reached my frontier, their seed does not exist, their heart and their soul are finished forever and ever'; 'Their people and their heirs are non-existent upon earth and destroyed are their nostrils unto eternity.'¹⁶

The determination to bring the chaos to an end is so strong that, in the process, economic considerations are quite overlooked: as in the case of the Israelite *herem*, killing is better than taking prisoners, destruction better than booty, complete devastation better than exploitation.¹⁷ Castration (symbolizing the elimination of every reproductive capacity)¹⁸ and the felling of trees¹⁹ are the coherent demonstration of a will to destroy which surpasses any will to rebuild. At the end, the rebels are portrayed 'as those who had never existed',²⁰ their fearful features being not only removed from the future but erased from the past.

A third way of ending a rebellion is to provoke the enemies' flight, their disappearance from the known world. Enemies (especially their leaders) hide in caves,²¹ disappear in the desert or woodlands, find escape on high mountains, or flee to remote and unknown countries.²² This is neither formal submission nor physical elimination, yet the result is the same. By removing themselves from the scene, they renounce their challenge to the cosmic order.²³ Furthermore, their hope that flight will save them is generally an illusion, for to escape immediate punishment does not mean escaping forever. Divine punishment may take different forms, including self-destruction, for the madness of these people is even more evident following their defeat than at the time of their rebellion.²⁴

More often than not, the enemies' flight is just a prelude to punishment, since it does nothing more than enrage the victorious army and stimulate pursuit. In the *Annals of Murshili*, the flight of the enemies into inaccessible mountains is a recurrent motif, one connected with the topological configuration of the Anatolian scenery, with the seasonal movements of the mountain transhumant tribes and their fight-and-withdraw tactics.²⁵ And the pursuit by the Hittite army and the final punishment by military attack or starvation are as much recurrent:

I went to mount Arinnanda. This mount Arinnanda is very difficult, emerging from the sea, and it is very high and wooded, it is also rocky and it is impossible to tread by horse. The prisoners (i.e. the future, foredoomed prisoners!) occupied it all with their troops. Since it was impossible to proceed by horse, I, the Sun, went by foot at the head of my troops, and I ascended by foot on mount Arinnanda. I besieged the prisoners through hunger and thirst. And when they were starving and thirsty, and the situation became difficult for them, the prisoners came out and fell down at my feet: 'Our lord, do not destroy us! Our lord, take us at your service and bring us to Hattusha!'²⁶

In the centralized ideology, war is a one-way activity, be it the extermination of rebels or plunder and destruction. No real battle takes place because no encounter between equals, or near equals, is conceivable. The qualitative gap between the cosmic army and its chaotic enemies is too large. In a highly symbolic way, war is similar to hunting and enemies are similar to wild game.²⁷ As the king demonstrates his valour by killing huge and terrifying animals in the desert or marshes (typically chaotic landscapes), so he has to demonstrate it by 'hunting' foreigners. Egyptian ideology requires that Pharaoh give such a demonstration, possibly at the very beginning of his reign, by successfully leading a military expedition against some rebel land.²⁸ The enemy may be a minor one and the expedition the only one undertaken during the entire reign. It is, nevertheless, enough to give symbolic realization to the programme of kingship expressed in the royal titles, which usually include ones like 'who smites/subdues the Nine Bows/the Libyans/the Asiatics' or the like.

Similar epithets are also common in Assyrian titles. Two letters written by Hattushili III to the young kings of Assyria and of Babylonia, as soon as they were enthroned, show how common in the Near East was the idea of symbolic realization of the programme at the beginning of the reign. The paternalistic tone is well fitting to the figure of the aged and experienced Hittite king:

I have heard that my brother is grown into a man and goes often to hunt. I am very pleased that the god Adad has thus made the name of Kadashman-Turgu, the offspring of my (deceased) brother, famous. And so I say: go ahead now, and make a razzia into the land of the enemy, and I would like to hear how many enemies my brother has slain ... My brother, you should not stay at home. Go out into the enemy country and defeat the enemy! But when you go out, go against a country on which you are three or four times superior.²⁹

He (= the new Assyrian king) keeps saying this: 'I want to accomplish something! if the neighbouring kings would come against me, I could make a certain name for myself' ... On whatever campaign he goes for the first time, where he is three or four times superior, or which is some overpowered place, let him go for the first time against such a place.³⁰

The existence of specific political implications in the old king's advice to the royal novice is possible and even probable. The Hittite king would probably appreciate a Babylonian campaign disturbing the common enemy, Assyria. And he wants to divert Assyrian military activity from countries in the Hittite sphere of interest to minor and more distant ones. But apart from these possible implications, the basic principle is purely ideological: a new king, to be fully accepted and entitled to reign, has to prove his valour, even in a symbolic encounter, a 'hunt' just a shade more dangerous than the usual. After such a demonstration, he can legitimately use epithets like 'who conquers the insubmissive peoples' or 'who pulls down the land of his enemies'.³¹ The advice given by Hattushili, in stressing the connection with hunting and the minor relevance of the required enterprise, puts the symbolic character of the accomplishment to the fore.

Yet ideology has physical consequences, and the mountain or steppe tribe selected for the show of valour may be of little consequence to the great king, but it is central to the lives of its own members. Empires need to generate rebels on their frontiers, and the spring of the enthronement year of a new Egyptian or Assyrian king will be a bad season for some tribe in the Nubian steppe or the Zagros hills.

13

Conquest as a Cosmic Organization

The standard motivation given by the Egyptian *Königsnovelle* for an expedition against foreign peoples is that these 'rebels' are threatening the borders of Egypt, whether merely by their intentions or the actual start of hostilities.¹ Egypt cannot tolerate the thought that the surrounding chaos may spill into its own territory. In the inner country the active presence of both gods and Pharaoh had successfully established a regime which preserved order, peace, harmony and prosperity. This cosmic organization took place much earlier, but elsewhere it has not yet been established, foreign countries remaining in a 'pre-creation' condition, or in one which might be better described as 'pre-cosmic organization'.² The central country is like an oasis, isolated in space from the surrounding chaos, and emerging in time from a past when chaos was generalized.

It is not necessary for foreigners to attack directly the inner country in order for them to cause it alarm. Fights among themselves carry the risk that violence will boil over the frontier, and as a result this can justify Pharaonic intervention:

Now for a long period of years Retenu had fallen into a state of anarchy, each man showing hostility toward his neighbour.³

One came to say to His Majesty: 'The vanquished Shasu, they plan rebellion. Their tribal chiefs are gathered together, rising against the Asiatics of Haru. They have begun cursing and quarreling, each of them slaying his neighbour, and they disregard the laws of the Palace'.⁴

His Majesty was informed that the 'Apiru of Mt Yarmutu, along with the Tayaru (tribe), had arisen and attacked the Asiatics of Raham'.⁵

Chaos and 'rebellion' are connected, since there cannot even be embryonic organization in the peripheral areas if the political structures provided by the king of the whole world are not accepted. In these structures there is no room for internecine wars. Nor are these structures compatible with alliances between foreign tribes, which are links in the wrong direction, haphazard connections between different points within the periphery instead of hierarchical connections between it and the centre. Far from being building blocks of organization, such alliances are an obstacle to it, an additional feature of chaos. In the Hittite view, the breaking of the loyalty oath brings about mental insanity, manifesting itself in fratricidal fights:

Although the Kalashma country was bound to me by treaty, they broke the treaty and began hostilities. But the gods of the oath manifested their justice, and the gods of the oath seized them, so that brother betrayed brother, friend betrayed friend, everybody killed everybody else.⁶

Murshili – who could read in his archives nice stories about similar crimes in his own country⁷ – is disgusted. He is also worried about the nature of the divine reaction, and refuses to accept a patricide as a vassal:

Aitagama was king of Qadesh and Ari-Teshub was his eldest son. As he saw that they were besieged and short of grain, Ari-Teshub killed his father Aitagama. Thereafter Ari-Teshub and the land of Qadesh turned to my side again and submitted to me. But under these circumstances I did not accept Ari-Teshub into vassalage. Since they had violated the oath, I said them: 'Let the gods of the oath carry out the curse: let son kill father, let brother kill brother, let everyone extinguish his own flesh!'⁸

Later on, since no more patricides had taken place in Qadesh, and the 'gods of the oath' seemed satisfied, politics will prevail over morals, and Ari-Teshub will be accepted as a regular vassal. In another case, the same Murshili II has no qualms in stating in advance that 'If a son of Tette kills Tette and says: "As a servant of the Sun, here I am"', he will grant the kingdom to the patricide.⁹

The basic point in a cosmic organization is legitimacy, and for the peripheral kinglets this means the consent of the gods – through the mediation of the central sovereign – to their rule. If the enemy tribes attempt to emerge independently from their chaos and provide themselves with a leader, they are doomed to failure. The attempt by

the Libyan tribes to appoint a common leader is condemned by Ramesses III: 'they asked a chief with their mouth, but it was not with their heart.'¹⁰ And the attempt by Pihhuniya to act as a king over the Kashka tribes provokes similarly hostile comment from Murshili II: 'Pihhuniya ruled not according to the Kashka custom, but suddenly, while in Kashka there was no rule of a single person, Pihhuniya ruled according to kingship.'¹¹ These leaders suddenly emerging from chaos have no legitimacy, because they arise against the cosmos and not as a part of it. They act not in accordance with the will of the gods but – impiously – on their own. They seem to believe that kingship is a purely human institution and can be improvised by anybody.

When chaos prevailed in the inner country (obviously in the past, since the author of the text is in any case the legitimate restorer of order), the main features were the same: no legitimate king, unlawful chiefs, fratricidal fights:

The land of Egypt was left in want; every man was a law unto himself, and they had no chief commander for many years from long ago to later times. Even though the land of Egypt possessed magistrates and herdsmen, people would slay one another both great and small. Another period followed of empty years, when Irsu, a Syrian, was with them as a magistrate, for he had set the entire land in servitude to himself: people would slay each other, and property would be stolen.¹²

Such a condition is normal for foreigners but a terrible prospect for the inner country to contemplate. In consequence, as soon as the outer chaos seems to have reached the danger level, an expedition must be launched to restore stability and submissiveness.¹³

After the victorious campaign has extinguished the spectre of encroaching chaos, after the rebel elements have been eliminated, a reorganization of the periphery can begin. The purpose of this, of course, is to enlarge the area where order prevails and push the dangerous belt back, further and further away from the central core. The reconstruction builds on elements from among the conquerors, together with local survivors prepared to acknowledge the authority of the centre: '30,000 people were seized as prisoners; but then he (= Pharaoh) let them go (free), according to his desire that the wretched seed of Kush be not destroyed'.¹⁴

Their function is to work, to produce for the Pharaoh – an activity designated by the same term (*b'k*) used for inner taxation, implying their shift from external, tribute-paying vassals to inner producers, completely integrated into the redistributive system (Chapter 28).

Quite often, in order to ensure submissiveness through elimination of the local socio-political structures, the conquered peoples have to endure large-scale displacements: 'He placed the Shasu in the land of [...], he settled the Tehenu on the heights, filling the strongholds which he built, with the captivity of his mighty sword.'¹⁵ Large deportations of this sort (just a prelude to what will happen some centuries later) are well attested in the middle-Assyrian documents.¹⁶ It is also notable that they seem to take place to the inner country of Assyria (especially the new capital Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta), as well as to other points of the conquered periphery. In fact, the former are the only kind of deportation favoured by the Hittites, always short of manpower and too worried about keeping their own country in working order to spare a thought for the depopulated conquered countries. A Hittite treaty reveals the only explicit criticism found of the use of deportees to repopulate the inner country, though this was prompted not so much by the use made of the deportees as by the damage caused by their loss to the local population:

The city of Tiliura was laid waste since the days of Hantili. My father Murshili rebuilt it and repopulated it, but in a wrong way: he populated it with deportees seized by his weapons, while the former inhabitants of Tiliura he left besides. But I, the Sun, brought them back and settled them again in Tiliura.¹⁷

A cosmic organization, based on the differentiated functions of core and periphery, occasions two movements of people. The first is centripetal and consists of a massive shift of manpower; this is not dissimilar from the movement of other 'raw materials'. The second is centrifugal and comprises the despatching of a few specialized officials entrusted with administration and control.

The basic feature in all this is the reconstruction and reorganization of the conquered towns. The Hittites had a long tradition of retaining the local town-centred political system, contenting themselves merely with the installation of members of their royal family as local kings.¹⁸ The system is still applied by Shuppiliuma in the key cities of Aleppo and Karkemish:

When he conquered the city – since my father feared the gods – on the upper citadel he let no one into the presence of the goddess Kubaba and of the god KAL, and he did not rush close to any of the temples ... But from the lower town he removed the inhabitants, silver, gold, and bronze utensils and carried them to Hattusha ... Then he [appointed]

his son Sharru-Kushuh and gave him the country and the city of Karkemish to govern and made him a king of his own.¹⁹

The Egyptian and Assyrian reorganization of cities seems to be more drastic. It starts from the physical reconstruction of the town, which, because nothing of the old chaos has to survive at the symbolic level, even takes on a new name: 'He made a great slaughter in the land of the Shasu; he plundered their tells, slaying their people and rebuilding with towns bearing his name';²⁰ 'When I saw the deserted and uncultivated areas of the city Taidu ... I delineated its territory and therein founded a Palace. I built it from top to bottom and deposited my stelae.'²¹

The countryside is also reorganized accordingly: measured, and inserted into the precise administrative procedures of the inner country:

Behold, the cultivable land was divided into fields, which the inspectors of the Palace calculated in order to reap their harvest. Statements of the harvest which was brought to His Majesty from the fields of Megiddo: 208,200 fourfold measures of grain, besides that which was cut as forage by the army of His Majesty.²²

The contributions that would otherwise arrive at unforeseen times and in fluctuating amounts from a chaotic country are in this way carefully regulated. All the procedures are to be brought into line with those of the inner country: the administrative dispatches usual inside Egypt are also sent to the conquered provinces, inspection tours by armed contingents ensure regularity of supply and freedom of circulation, and fixed garrisons at key points constitute a stabilizing and pacifying network. Everything that was divided, movable, uncertain and hostile must now be unitary, stable, certain and peaceful.

This is the ideology of conquest and colonization. Some principles are common to Egyptians, Hittites and Assyrians, though the celebrative documents used in our analysis already reveal different features. Furthermore, the differences increase if we consider more practical data and strive to glimpse the real functioning of the conquered areas.

The Egyptian control over Palestine and southern Syria is flexible and diversified. Governors' residences (Sumura, Kumidi, Gaza),²³ minor garrison posts (like Beth Shan),²⁴ harbours on the coast and the grain-producing Yarimuta area represented an inner core of cities administered by Egypt.²⁵ A second belt of vassal kings covered most of Cisjordan, the coast up to Ugarit or to Byblos, the central Beqa' and other settled zones: this is the tribute paying area. The outer belt (most of Transjordan,

wooded or steppe zones in Palestine and northern Beqa', the Hawran), is not firmly controlled, exposed as it is to the fluctuations of transhumance, insecure communications and political disloyalty.²⁶ Moreover, even in the core area under Egyptian administration, the Egyptian presence is scarce in number and provisional in character. Egyptians do not like to remain in the 'colonized' foreign lands indefinitely; they long to go home, to die in Egypt and be buried there.²⁷

The Hittite system as it appears in northern Syria is strongly conditioned by the scarcity of the human element. The Hittites can neither colonize nor even establish substantial garrisons. They have to resort to personalized political relations. Royal intermarriage with the vassal kings, appointment of members of the royal family in the major towns, a network of formal treaties and of minor juridical stipulations ensure political loyalty in the conquered areas through personal channels.²⁸ At least in Karkemish the local Hittite king is supported by a small elite of palace officials and merchants, but the basic population remains the old one.²⁹

In the case of Assyria, the system is different again, Upper Mesopotamia appearing to receive a substantial influx of its people. Town building and agricultural exploitation of the main westward route (along the present Syro-Turkish border) and southward along the Habur result in the setting up of Assyrian posts amid places still inhabited by the former Hurrian population. This network of 'colonies' ensures political and military stability, and easy communications.³⁰

We have no need to 'prophecy' about what will happen at the collapse of the empires in the early twelfth century BC, since we are aware of that from later sources. Nevertheless, the prophecy would have been rather easy. When the Egyptian empire collapses, no Egyptian political presence is left – just cultural influence and trade contacts, reshaped according to the new situation (see Chapter 27). When the Hittite empire collapses, its centres in south-eastern Anatolia and northern Syria continue to exist as 'neo-Hittite' states, the local dynasts having no need to depend upon the old motherland thanks to their self-supporting economic and political basis. By contrast, the middle-Assyrian empire is doomed to survival: the nuclei of Assyrian colonists remain, though encircled by the invading Aramaean tribes, and keep their political contacts with the motherland.³¹ They will resist for centuries, revitalized from time to time by the most active kings and reintegrated with new colonists – until they will constitute the basis of a new empire.

14

Peace as Submission

After the trouble and feverish activity of the foreign rebellion, peace means to reach a state of order, rest, immobility. The best foreigner is a dead one; next comes one who has submitted. His correct position is under the feet of Pharaoh, and the classical iconography of the king trampling upon his enemies¹ is even better expressed in other ways: the soles of shoes having a Syrian and a Nubian depicted on them;² or the statue-bases with the Nine Bows aligned on the upper surface, under the standing figure of the sovereign;³ or the ceremonial runner in the Amarna palace, with alternate Nubians and Asiatics to be daily trodden on by Pharaoh on his way to the throne room.⁴

When the critical moment of submission takes place on the battlefield, the prisoners are bound with their elbows behind their backs.⁵ This is a sort of straitjacket that ensures a speedy passage from the insane excitement of rebellion to orderly calm. When submission is voluntary, the potential rebel bows down to the ground 'seven and seven times', 'upon back and upon belly', to make it easier for Pharaoh – if it be his wish – to trample upon him.⁶

The 'rebels' are most readily sorted out in the context of a military campaign. If they resist, they are annihilated; if they submit, they survive. The siege of Megiddo is a good example of this sifting process, for the enemies can come out of the city wall in order to submit, not in order to fight – or to flee. The end of the siege comes when all the chiefs come out to submit:

Now the princes of this foreign land came out on their bellies to kiss the ground to the might of His Majesty, and to beg breath for their nostrils, because of the greatness of his strength and the extent of the power of Amun over all foreign lands ... Then His Majesty appointed the rulers anew for every town.⁷

The act of 'making peace' is more precisely 'making an act of submission', a 'surrender without conditions'.⁸ The foreigners must more properly 'ask for peace' in order to be left alive.⁹ Pharaoh needs to do nothing, for his position at the centre of the world is unconstrained and immovable. The foreigner/rebel has to give up his rebellion and signify obeisance. Therefore the 'literary genre' in which peace is recorded is not a bilateral treaty, negotiated and subscribed to by both parties, but a 'loyalty oath' (*sdf*; *tryt*)¹⁰ sworn by a servant to his lord; apart from permitting survival, this carries no obligation in return. Here is the formulation of the oath of submission: 'We shall not repeat the evil against Menheperre our lord, during our lifetimes: for we have seen his power, and he has given us breath as he desires.'¹¹ The formalization of surrender is not too different: 'Give us your breath, oh our lord, and the countries of Retenu will not rebel again!'¹² In both cases the promise is not to rebel again, with reference at the same time to the previous rebellion and to the general potential for rebellion that constitutes the very nature of foreign peoples. And in both cases the reward is the 'breath of life', a survival which by now will be dependent on the will of Pharaoh, the monopolistic owner of the 'breath' (see Chapter 25).

As well as being unilateral, the oath of submission is very simple and all-encompassing in its applications. Pharaoh may order anything and the servant has to obey. There is no need for a detailed formulation of cases, the criterion being the will of Pharaoh and his judgement. This view of the rebel's submission is maximalistic. The opposite, minimalistic approach is of course proposed by the vassals, at least the most ambitious among them: 'Look: I am a faithful servant of the king, I committed no crime and no sin, I did not withhold my tributes, I did not withhold the requests of my governor.'¹³ What else could Pharaoh expect?

The Syro-Palestinian 'theory' that a vassal can do anything unless he commits a specific sin against his overlord is apparently quite distant from the Egyptian 'theory'. But in fact the two views are substantially coincident, since Pharaoh is uninterested in anything but his own position. As a result, he does not care for what the local kinglets are doing in their own fights and personal contests. These are symptoms of the restless condition typical of the periphery, and to be removed only if they become a threat to the general stability of the entire system (see Chapter 13). The all-encompassing character of the oath allows for a maximum of freedom in the local activities, albeit always at the risk of an Egyptian intervention, the terms of which will appear arbitrary since never precisely defined.

The system in use in the Asiatic regions has common and divergent features as well. The basic common feature is the statement of submission

as an unconditional self-commitment to the winner, in order that life may be spared. In the Annals of Murshili the statement of surrender is quite typical, taking the form: 'Our lord, do not destroy us! Our lord, take us at your service!'¹⁴ The result of submission is mass deportation, the number of prisoners belonging to the king being recorded as very high, and the prisoners belonging to the rest of the Hittite army being simply 'numberless'. The idea of 'working in return for survival' is common to the Egyptian and the Hittite systems. Yet the Egyptians are more concerned with the uncontaminated preservation of their inner country (which is already densely settled) and prefer to keep most of the subdued people working in their own land and forwarding tribute or tax to them. They transplant prisoners to Egypt basically in order to provide the great temples with slaves. But the total of 89 600 'prisoners' taken by Amenophis II in Nuhashe is a realistic figure for the entire population of the area, which was left 'prisoner' on the spot.¹⁵ And the same holds true for the 30 000 'prisoners' of Kush, left on the spot (see Chapter 13). The Hittites are less preoccupied by intermingling with other Anatolian peoples, and the afflux of prisoners to Hatti seems to be a large-scale phenomenon.¹⁶

As for the surrendering ruler, he too may be left alive, in the physical and the political sense of the word (see Chapter 25), and this is true of the Egyptian and Assyrian systems alike – as we have seen in the Megiddo surrender and the Shattuara case (see Chapter 12). After all, since foreign rulers are unreliable by definition, it would serve no purpose to appoint a new one. However, the Hittites seem much more suspicious and less inclined to give a second chance to the former rebel. When Manapa-Tarhunta asks to be spared and accepted as a servant, Murshili at first refuses on principle, recalling his past treachery. Begged to change his mind by the mother of the vassal (how cowardly is the enemy who sends an old woman to humble herself!), Murshili cannot refuse, but spares Manapa-Tarhunta only for ethical reasons and against his better political judgement.¹⁷ Normally the Hittite overlord prefers to appoint a new vassal, one innocent of the sin of rebellion. In fact, this sin is a personalized one in the Hittite view, not an 'original sin' of all the foreigners as in the Egyptian. But the stipulation containing the terms of submission is written (the Egyptian oath being just a verbal one), it is reciprocal although uneven, and it is very detailed in all its clauses. The vassal knows exactly what he can and cannot do. In consequence, there should be no surprise at the Hittite reaction, no arbitrary intervention. But it is also true that the freedom left to the vassals is extremely limited.

In the two different systems – the Egyptian and the 'Asiatic' ones – the basic concern is to keep the subdued peoples 'bound', either physically at

the moment of capture, or politically by an oath – the oath being a ‘bond’ (*rikiltu*, from *rakāsu* ‘to bind’) ensuring stability. The reward for submission is ‘peace’ and ‘life’, and this ideology is accepted by the submissive vassals. Rib-Adda’s worldview is consistent in viewing ‘life’ and ‘peace’ as the fruit of his submission to Pharaoh and the intervention of the Egyptian army and the elimination of the rebels (*ḫabiru*).¹⁸

But Rib-Adda has also handed down to us (in order to condemn it) the alternative ideology of peace propagandized by the *ḫabiru* and ‘loose dog’ Abdi-Ashirta:

Kill your lord and be like us: then you will have peace! ... We shall drive out the mayors from the lands, and all the lands will become *ḫabiru*. A pact be established for all the lands, and the sons and daughters will have peace in the days to come. Even if he (= Pharaoh) will come out, all the lands will be hostile to him, and what can he do against us? – So they have established an oath among themselves.¹⁹

Abdi-Ashirta’s programme amounts to an explicit overturning of the pharaonic one: peace is reached by rebellion, not by submission; by driving out the Egyptians, not by accepting their domain; through local unity against the invaders, the kind of ‘coalition’ negatively considered as a chaotic element by the Egyptians. We take for granted that Abdi-Ashirta’s programme was a political instrument for getting more power in the local Amurru setting.²⁰ But it is probable that the kind of arguments he used were popular in the Syro-Palestinian population of the time. In other words, this is an exceptional hint of the existence of alternative, non-imperialistic ideologies, whose oral formulation did not find its way into the written records – unless they were quoted by way of polemics against them.

15

Ordeal by War

In the centralized perspective, there is never any doubt concerning the outcome of a war. The winner is known before the battle takes place: the enemy's army is so inferior in quality that it is impossible for him to make up for this by numbers or deception. What takes place is not a clash of two contraposed forces, but the submission of an inferior to a superior world. The two adversaries cannot even meet or fight; we have no real battles, only flights and massacres.

By contrast, in the symmetrical view of war the two adversaries are on the same level: which prevails is a matter of degree, not quality.¹ And the balance of forces is tested from time to time in order to establish where the boundary between the two spheres is located, or who is the overlord of a disputed territory:

When Muwatalli, uncle of my Sun, became king, the men of Amurru broke the loyalty and told him: 'We were your servant by our own will, now we are no longer your servants', and they went into servitude to Egypt. Then Muwatalli and the king of Egypt fought each other for the men of Amurru.²

Here, the issue of war is uncertain: battles take place precisely to determine the winner, and thereafter to arrange matters accordingly. It is frankly admitted that 'our' political or military formation may win or lose with equal probability. The Hittites' vassals are presumed to think: '(True,) I am bound to the oath and treaty; but I do not know whether they (= the Hittites) will defeat the enemies, or the enemies will defeat them.'³ Even in contexts requiring a display of maximum self-confidence, victory is seen as just one possibility: 'If perhaps in the future the Great King overcomes these kings, then the Great King will give you a sealed treaty

tablet.⁴ In such a situation, the ritual preparation for war cannot be limited to smashing the figurines representing the enemies, and then enthusiastically leaving to smash the real enemies with similar ease. This kind of simple morale-boosting can and must be kept for the inner audience of the troops. This is because in a multicentred world the 'technical' preparation for war by means of magic procedures requires much more sophistication. The Hittite kings, having many times experienced hard-won victories and near defeats, have developed the practice of staging a full 'rehearsal' of the entire campaign; this enables them to be sure of divine approval (and subsequent help) for every single move. The divinatory KIN-system provides adequate tools, with its symbolic landscape built up of fixed and movable entities, in a sort of chessboard through which the symbol of the Hittite army marches toward either success or failure. The daily itinerary of the army, the battles together with their results, everything is tested and modified and tested again until the response is positive.⁵

This is an extreme case, but it well illustrates the uncertainties of the time. The military balance so characteristic of the period materializes in battles of problematic result, among enemies of analogous technical and quantitative weight, unable to achieve a decisive victory: Hittites and Egyptians at Qadesh,⁶ Assyrians and Babylonians at Suqaqu.⁷ Obviously the 'problematic battles' allow both kings to proclaim victory upon arriving back home, and to continue the military encounter by means of propaganda. After his failure on the battlefield of Qadesh, Ramesses II built up the most gigantic (iconographic and literary) celebration ever conceived by an Egyptian king, pretending to have won alone against the entire Hittite army. And Hattushili reacted by drawing attention to the fact that Ramesses' pretence was consistent neither with reality nor with the friendly relations newly established.⁸ As for the battle of Suqaqu, this was celebrated as a success by Babylonians and Assyrians alike – a dispute echoed by pro-Babylonian and pro-Assyrian scholars.⁹

At the same time, technical reports brought to the king in the palace from officers in the field make clear the difficulties of overcoming an enemy quite similar to us in troops and armament, and in the strategy and tactics of war:

Now since five months the frost eats me, my chariots are broken, my horses are dead, my army is gone ... Perhaps shortly the king of Egypt will arrive, and we cannot prevail by force. But perhaps the king of Egypt will not really come out, (only) a contingent of archers will come out: (in this case) I will prevail by force.¹⁰

Needless to say, battles are won by divine aid. On this point the Egyptian, Assyrian and Hittite views are almost identical: at the same time alongside and above the king, his gods protect him and fight for him.¹¹ They are invisible to human eyes, but the effect of their action is evident: it is the victory that the king achieves. Both centralized and symmetrical views make use of divine aid and decision as an explanation (or better 'the' explanation) of victories, but in a different way. In the centralized perspective divine help is expressed in the evident superiority of our army, of our action, of our courage in comparison to the enemies'. Our king alone (but flanked by the gods!) is enough to win. The divine presence has a triumphalistic function. In the symmetrical view, however, it has a judicial function. Since the two parties are more or less equivalent in their human skill and technical resources, the victory of one of them means that he was backed by an element not enjoyed by his adversary: divine support. The gods, by supporting one of the fighters, decide who has to win. If we want to reformulate our initial statement giving the divine element its full role, we should say: in the centralized perspective, it is already known beforehand who is supported by the gods; in the symmetrical perspective it is realized only after the battle is over.

As a matter of fact, the enemies have their own gods too. Clearly the gods will decide according to moral and juridical reasons: the 'right' contestant will win, the 'wrong' one will die – and we could not know for sure who was right before he won. Battles therefore assume all the characteristics of a trial by ordeal: in a dispute that cannot be settled by verbal debate, the decision will be obtained by military struggle.¹² It would be incorrect, however, to state that, by virtue of winning, the winner becomes right – this is our pragmatic interpretation. At the ideological level, the reverse is true: the test will be decided (by the gods) in favour of the contender who was right.

Conceptions of war as a form of trial by ordeal are particularly clear in the Hittite texts. The challenge addressed to the enemy king has the character of a court argument – it aims at demonstrating that the Hittite king is right and the enemy is wrong, so anticipating the divine judgement:

My servants who went over to you, when I asked them back you did not give them back to me. You dealt with me as if I was a child, you despised me. Now, let's fight the one against the other, and the Storm God my lord will decide our judgement!¹³

I came here, but I stopped before the border of your land, I did not invade your land, I did not take away prisoners, cattle and sheep. But

you did begin the strife against my Sun, you did come, invade the land of Dankuwa and depopulate it. The gods will go at my side and decide the trial in my favour.¹⁴

Immediately afterwards, Murshili boasts that he attacked first. This makes it clear that before the challenge is made what is at issue is a question of 'justice', and it is better to have been attacked and suffered destruction, so being 'right'; after the challenge it is a question of heroic behaviour, and it is more prestigious to attack.

The passage just quoted is in substance almost identical with a ritual in which a dispute between peoples is coupled with a dispute between gods. The line of reasoning and arguing is the same:

We have summoned you, gods of Kashka, to a trial. Come here, eat and drink; and hear the charge we raise against you. The gods of Hatti did never take anything away from you, they never did anything wrong against you. But you, gods of Kashka, you did begin the strife, you expelled the Hatti gods from their lands, you took their land for you. Also the Kashka people begun the strife: they took away cities from the Hatti people, they dislodged them from their fields and their vines.¹⁵

The human contest will be decided by the gods, but the gods' decision also depends on a kind of contest between opposing gods, symmetry being reproduced at the theological understanding of reality as well.

As usual, the relationship of ideology and reality is one of overturning: in the very same moment that a dispute cannot be decided by words and arguing, and requires recourse to war, the interpretation views the war as decided by words and arguing. The basic principle seems to be that the party is in the wrong who, in one way or another, began the hostilities. Hence the necessity of going back in time and interpreting the events of the past in their causal relations, until a fixed point is reached when the enemy committed the original wrong. This is a fundamental stimulus to the so-called 'historiographic' attitude¹⁶ – while the centralized perspective is a stimulus to a ritualized repetition, with fixed roles and fixed result, of 'history as a feast'.¹⁷

Once the legal challenge has been formulated, events run toward the correct outcome. At times, the signs of divine decision may be perceived even before the final encounter. A true and proper 'sign' from the sky (meteorite or thunderbolt),¹⁸ favourable weather,¹⁹ particularly awkward conduct by the enemy:²⁰ everything can be read as a forecast of victory.

The prevalence of reason and justice over military and political power is such that the contender who is seemingly smaller and weaker can win. This is the best demonstration that the decisive factor is divine intervention, and behind it the correct conduct of the protagonist. In viewing his rebellion against Urhi-Teshub as a legal contest based on correctness of conduct and on legitimacy of roles, Hattushili stresses this point as decisive:

You are a great king, while I am a small king. Let us go in judgement before the Storm God my lord and Shaushga of Shamuha my lady. If you prevail in the trial, they will raise you; but if I prevail in the trial, they will raise me.²¹

You began the strife against me. Now, you are a great king, while I am king only of the single fortress you left me. Come out! And Shaushga of Shamuha and the Storm God of Nerikka will decide our case.²²

The military encounter is decided on moral grounds: Hattushili is correct, pious, generous; his adversary is illegitimate, impious, treacherous. Moral superiority overrides the discrepancy in rank: '(otherwise) would (the gods) let a great king succumb to a small king?'²³

Though most of the examples of war as trial by ordeal come from Hittite sources, the most elaborated treatment is to be found in the poem of Tukulti-Ninurta.²⁴ The poem constitutes a major effort by the Assyrian scribes to continue the competition against Babylon, already won on the battlefield, at the level of culture and ideology.²⁵ The poem is a celebration of the victory, but it is also a justification of it. This is because the culture and religion of Babylon enjoyed an old prestige, and the plunder of the royal palace and the temples, and the 'deportation' of its gods to Assyria, invited the charge of sacrilege. The poem tries to demonstrate that the reverse is true: it is the Assyrian king who is pious and correct, while the Kassite king is a traitor, not only in his human relations but especially in breaking the divine oath. The three basic points that we have already pointed out in the Hittite texts are also present in the Tukulti-Ninurta epic.

The first point is that the enemy king committed a sin, apparently against Assyria but basically against Shamash, who was the guarantor of the previous Assyro-Babylonian treaty.²⁶ In breaking the oath, the Kassite king casts himself as a wrongdoer and is doomed to the final defeat.

The second point is that the Babylonian gods abandon the Kassite king, thus leaving the way open to the Assyrian gods and to the god of justice,

Shamash, to punish the culprit. There is no need (as in the Hittite rituals) to 'evocate', to call out the Babylonian gods, for they leave on their own initiative at the very beginning of the story: Marduk abandons Babylon, Sin abandons Ur, Shamash abandons Sippar and Larsa, and so on.²⁷ The voluntary abandonment of Babylonia by the gods is also a justification for the 'deportation' of their statues to Assyria after the final sack of the town – the most impious action being so justified as the physical ratification of an abandonment which had already taken place.²⁸

The third point is the challenge to trial by ordeal pronounced by Tukulti-Ninurta, as usual by inverting roles and responsibilities: the invader claims to be innocent, to have been injured and provoked. The Assyrian king addresses the justice of Shamash:

When our fathers made a pact before your divinity, they swore an oath between them and invoked your greatness ... Why has the king of the Kassites from of old invalidated your plan and your ordinance? He had not fear of your oath, he transgressed your command, he schemed an act of malice. He has made his crimes enormous before you, judge me, O Shamash! But he who committed no crime against the king of the Kassites, act favourably toward him. By your great command bestow the victory on the observer of oaths. He who does not obey your command, obliterate his people in the rout of battle.²⁹

On the other side, Kashtiliash is imagined to be aware of his crimes and of the abandonment by the gods, and to be already discouraged before the ordeal by battle takes place. When finally the Kassite king can no longer avoid the encounter, the Assyrian formation which he confronts consists mainly of the gods themselves, followed by the Assyrian king at the head of the human component, and lastly by the troops.

We do not have the Babylonian version of events, since a defeated and occupied country could hardly publish an official poem making propaganda against an occupying force. But later on this version emerges, and this time it is naturally the Assyrian king who is the impious profaner of sanctuaries, whose guilt is confirmed by divine punishment:

Ashur-nadin-apli son of Tukulti-Ninurta – who had carried out criminal designs on Babylon – and the officers of Assyria rebelled against him (= Tukulti-Ninurta), removed him from his throne, shut him up in Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta in a room and killed him.³⁰

Since ideology has some influence on reality, we may ask to what extent the Babylonian policy of Tukulti-Ninurta encouraged his opponents, who possibly provided an ideological justification for their regicide and patricide. The murder of Tukulti-Ninurta may help us to understand why the poem was composed and divulged, why a propagandistic interpretation of the Babylonian affair was deemed necessary. If we may elaborate on the Babylonian interpretation of the facts, Tukulti-Ninurta was wrong in interpreting as the final verdict of the gods, in triumphal manner, what was in fact an intermediate passage and a major 'sin'. This was avenged by the gods some years later through what truly was their final verdict: the murder of the king found guilty of profanity.

It is typical of the views of opposing propagandists that they fit one into the other by alternating their respective positions: what represents a 'sin' from one perspective is 'punishment' from the other, and the chain of reactions might go on for ever. The ideological interpretation is a good reflection of a feud-like series of reciprocal acts of revenge, but it is also a good stimulus to an endless continuation of the feud. Every party is always able to count one more link back in the chain of past 'sins', and consequently to feel authorized to add one more link to the chain of 'punishments'.

16

The Rules of War

The gap between the theological view of war as trial by ordeal and the practical conduct of military operations is filled by an ideological but secular view of war. Like any social activity, war has to follow accepted rules in order to be a constitutive rather than disruptive feature of the overall socio-political order. The unavoidable destruction of war affects single elements in the system, not the system itself. If the rules are followed, the stability of the civilized world is not prejudiced; people who do not follow the rules are disqualified from membership – they are barbarians.

The rules of war are rules of speech as well as rules of action: what to say is as important as how to act. These rules are linked both to the theological evaluation of war (trial by ordeal) and to its tactical/material practice. Their purpose is twofold: to demonstrate that we are right, and to win. The model war must be righteous (according to the theological norm), correct (conducted according to the rules) and, of course, victorious. The system is coherent: no victory is possible in the absence of proper conduct and a just cause. The defeated peoples are either barbarians, unaware of rules and justice; or they are nominally members of civilized society but in fact – in the actual circumstances of this war – sinful or unwilling to observe the rules.

War is a legal procedure and not a mere search for material advantages. As a result, the rules tend to put the contenders on the same level, to provide both of them with the same chances of victory – this being determined by righteousness, courage and personal valour. Ruse and fraud are not a constitutive element of the paradigm of war among civilized peoples. As with any game or other form of contest,¹ a fair war, and its climax in the pitched field-battle, has to take place in a delimited space, at a fixed time, according to equivalent if not identical moves and balanced

chances. As we shall see from the official challenges, the battle has to take place in an area known to both sides, an open space suitable to the movements of the armies and to the requirement that each should enjoy a clear view of the other; this also means that it must take place during the day. The battlefield has a terminology of its own and a convenient shape.² The battle itself does not take place 'suddenly' or by surprise, but when both armies are properly arrayed: 'Tukulti-Ninurta, your army should stand fast until the appointed time of Shamash arrives. Do not begin your fighting until the right season to fight me!'³ Yet the reverse also obtains: when the armies make contact, they must fight, nobody can hold back.⁴ The roles of 'attacker' and 'defender' are pre-arranged in the spoken preliminaries; as for the attack itself, this must be a frontal one.

The paradigm of the correct war is emphasized by contrasting it with the style of warfare of barbarian peoples who do not follow the rules, thus implying their inferiority from the outset. They do not respect the rules because in a condition of parity they would certainly lose. They try to compensate for their inferiority by resorting to trickery, but no ruse is enough to win, since their inferiority is not military but theological. Treachery, instead of filling the technological gap, merely increases the ideological one.

The contemptible practices associated with barbarian warfare are well known. The Asiatic nomads, according to Egyptian judgement, 'do not communicate the day of battle'.⁵ The Kashka tribes attack during the night, from behind, by surprise;⁶ furthermore, they prefer wooded or hilly areas, and take advantage of any particular difficulties experienced by the Hittite army.⁷ By the same token, if properly confronted and challenged, they refuse battle and flee to the mountains. This is not war: in our terminology it is just guerrilla activity – small-scale warfare, by small people, of small moral stature.

Midway between the correct behaviour of the civilized winner and the irregular conduct of the barbarian is the improper conduct of the enemy king, who knows the rules but does not follow them. This is an unequivocal sign of his fear and a prelude to his defeat. The Hittite king at Qadesh, instead of communicating the day and place of the encounter, sends false information. Having concealed his troops behind the town walls, he then attacks the attacker, and does so not only by surprise (the Egyptian army not being ready) but on the flank (see Chapter 17). We also find Kashtiliash at first trying to exploit surprise in an attack, but then – when the regular encounter is ready – seeking to avoid or delay the battle and attempting to take advantage of the wooded countryside. Anatolian adversaries of the Hittites escape into mountains that are so steep, rocky

and wooded that the horses of their pursuers falter.⁸ Shattuara occupies the watering-places and attacks the Assyrian troops when they are 'thirsty and fatigued'.⁹

In some cases 'our' king makes use of some cunning variant of the correct paradigm, thus in fact copying certain features of the barbarian style, even if this is positively connoted in the accounts of his action. For instance, Murshili attacks in the dark night,¹⁰ or marches all night in order to attack at the break of dawn (were the enemies 'ready'?).¹¹ Murshili's conduct is justified by the behaviour of his opponents: if you can't beat them, join them.

The apex of the spoken war is the official challenge sent by the king who believes he has been injured or provoked. The Old Hittite Zukrashi text already contains the formulation that will become typical of the Late Bronze period: 'I came against you: come out! If you do not come, I will subdue you like a bear, and you will die suffocated.'¹² The formula employed by Tukulti-Ninurta contains all the suggestions of trial by ordeal: 'We shall meet on this day, just as a righteous man takes the spoil of an evildoer ... So come to me on the battlefield of the servants, and let us investigate the case together. From this festival of battle, may the transgressor of oath not rise up, may they cast away his corpse!'¹³

The challenge is basically an invitation to 'come out' or 'come here' (Hittite *ehu*, Akkadian *alkam* or *kušdam*),¹⁴ and the challenged king has two correct possibilities. The first is to answer 'come in, I will wait for you here', thus assuming the role of the defender in his own territory:

We wrote to Irrite, and the Hurrians replied to Piyashili: 'Why are you coming? If you are coming to battle, come! To the land of the Great King you will not go back (alive)!' When we heard the words of the Irrite people, we crossed the Euphrates and we arrived at Irrite to do battle. The gods of the Great King, the king of Hatti, went in front of us; and the Hurrians that Shuttarna had sent to Irrite as a protection and the chariots and foot-troops of the Irrite district gathered together and waited for us.¹⁵

The other possibility is to answer: 'do not move, I am coming', thus assuming the more heroic role of the attacker, and displacing the theatre of war to the territory of the challenger:

I, the Sun, went against him, and I sent him a messenger, and I wrote: 'Send me out my servants that you hold and that you brought into the Kashka cities!' But Pihhuniya replied: 'I will give you back nothing.

And if you want to come to battle against me, I will not await you for battle in my territory: I will come against you in your own territory and I will do battle against you in your own territory'.¹⁶

A variant formulation of the challenge is a 'come here' rather than a 'come out', presumably a challenge sent to the attacker by the king being attacked and not vice versa:

Hurba-tilla, king of Elam, wrote to Kurigalzu: 'Come here! Let us do battle together in Dur-Shulgi'. Kurigalzu heard ... and he went to conquer Elam. Hurba-tilla did battle against him at Dur-Shulgi, but he retreated before him, and Kurigalzu brought about his defeat.¹⁷

The enemy king has of course a different possibility, namely to refuse battle and to disengage from the encounter, but this is disqualifying conduct. Urhi-Teshub, challenged by Hattushili ('come out!'), at first withdraws to the Upper Country and then shuts himself in Shamuha 'like a pig in a pig-sty', thus doing exactly the opposite of coming out, courageously, to do battle.¹⁸ The invader Shuppiluliuma tries repeatedly to meet the Mitanni king on the battlefield, but the latter decides to remain inside his walled towns:

When my father sent a message to the king of Mitanni, he wrote: 'When in the past I came to besiege Karkemish, I attacked the town and I wrote to you: "Come out, let us fight" but you did not come out to a battle. So now come out and let us fight!' But he remained in Washukkanni and did not even answer, and he did not come out to a battle.¹⁹

Lastly, a rather difficult and fragmentary letter²⁰ contains the Babylonian reply to an Assyrian reproach for 'not having waited for us (not even) one day in the city of Zaqqa'. The episode is also known from the Synchronic History, with Nebuchadnezzar starting the siege of Zanqi but immediately withdrawing (in order to avoid battle) before the arrival of Ashur-resh-ishi.²¹

If we take into account these and other examples quoted in this book, the pattern is consistent yet flexible. The most consistent point is that the battle 'enacted' has to be preceded by a 'spoken' or written challenge, so that both parties may present their cases. At the moment of the challenge the legal arguments are certainly well known and the recourse to war is already guaranteed: the arguments are repeated in a rather ritualistic manner and the demands are advanced too provocatively to be accepted.

The challenge and the response thus serve only to determine the modalities of the encounter: who is to attack, where and when. Within this pattern certain variations are possible: the challenge may be sent by the invader or by the king who has suffered invasion; before or after the hostilities have begun; before the war begins, or just before the battle during a longer war.

The unheroic tactics of refusing to engage on the open field and assuming the risk of the siege may be held in low esteem but they are not regarded as outside the rules. This is especially true if the enemy king is not a 'peer' but a mass of invaders. Thus the king of Alashiya suggests to the king of Ugarit, threatened by the first waves of the Sea Peoples: 'Encircle your cities with walls, let your troops and chariots enter, be alert to the enemies' arrival, and be very firm!'²² Such tactics even find literary support in the 'Legend of Naram-Sin', where it is also suggested that shelter should be found inside the walled cities until the invaders withdraw.²³

The spoken aspects of war do not exhaust themselves in the official challenge. The latter is merely the final and more ritualized act in a series of diplomatic contacts the function of which lies somewhere in the wide range from an attempt to find a peaceful solution to a reciprocal and progressive growth of tension. An aggressive attitude shaped by concern for 'prestige' manifests itself even in peaceful negotiations 'among brothers' about trade and marriages; it only becomes more obvious in the preliminaries to war. These spoken phases of war are not exclusive to the Asiatic kings, Egypt also being well integrated into the system: the description of the Megiddo and Qadesh battles (see Chapter 17) are a balanced compromise between a centralized view and the symmetrical rules of war. At the very beginning of the period, the Kamose stelae reveal an Egypt completely aware of, and concerned with, the Asiatic rules. Kamose sends his challenge, and Apophis queries the correctness of being attacked without having provoked in his turn the adversary.²⁴ All over the area the rules seem to have been known and more or less accepted, but of course the dosages of the centralized and symmetrical ideologies are different. In particular, the evaluation of the enemy as conducting himself improperly produces a complex and contradictory network. The Hittite king considers the Kashka as barbarians and the Mitanni king as fearful, but he is considered fearful by the Assyrians and unfair by the Egyptians; the Kassite king depicts himself as courageous, but is depicted by Tukulti-Ninurta as a coward; and so on.

When the armies finally meet in battle, they are on the same level. One of them, the army of the eventual winner (and narrator of the episode), is

both more heroic and more correctly behaved – it is ‘right’; in consequence, the other is doomed to defeat. But the test of battle is necessary, and the battle takes place as a reciprocal action, not as a one-sided massacre.

More features of the spoken aspect of war are attested on the occasion of the battle itself. The first is the exhortation of the king to his soldiers to prepare their armour and weapons and to be in readiness for the combat. Here is Tuthmosis III before the battle of Megiddo: ‘Prepare yourselves, make ready your weapons, for one will engage with that wretched foe in the morning’;²⁵ and here is Shalmaneser I before the battle of Nihriya: ‘Put on your armour, mount your chariots! The Hittite king is coming in battle array’.²⁶ The second is the reciprocal reviling by the two armies or their champions – thus repeating in a baser way the content of the formal challenge.²⁷

Finally, the armies are drawn up at the two ends of the field and the battle begins: ‘The lines of battle were drawn up, combat was joined on the battlefield.’²⁸ Battle begins in a rather ritualized way: Tuthmosis I shoots the first arrow,²⁹ as does Tukulti-Ninurta, who succeeds in killing an enemy – a symbolic success welcomed with enthusiasm by his troops.³⁰ Hattushili even reduces the entire battle to a personal contest between himself and the enemy champion, which of course he wins.³¹

The beginning of the attack is marked by the ‘battle cry’ of the king and the soldiers. Pharaoh’s cry³² is raised alone, while the Asiatic troops all shout together³³ – but this is only a matter of emphasis in the respective sources on which our knowledge of these procedures is based. In the soldiers’ cry, the hero’s enthusiasm is joined to a preoccupation with the possibility of death: ‘The warriors of Ashur cried: “To battle!” as they went to face death. They gave the battle cry “O Ishtar, spare (me)!” and praise the mistress in the fray.’³⁴ Here the idea of battle as a kind of game comes face to face with the tragic reality of death. In the Tukulti-Ninurta poem, the battle is a ‘feast’;³⁵ another good metaphor to express the ritualized channelling of enthusiasm. No field-battle, no frontal attack, could be possible without the game-like context and ritual preparation that lead the soldiers to believe, in a sort of trance, that only their enemies will die. The impact of ideology on reality is here fundamental to the very existence of the real event.

According to the winner’s accounts, the standard battles seem to have an immediate issue: the attackers overwhelm the enemy, who attempts to withdraw but is pursued and exterminated. If the defenders resist, the battle can continue all day long, and even continue to the day after (as in Qadesh), until the attackers desist. The evaluation of the number of

casualties is difficult, the insistence on the massacre of the defeated enemies being partly a liberating exorcism of the danger also run by the winners. An immediate collapse of one side in the battle would cause only a few casualties at the moment of engagement but many more during the pursuit, all of them on the loser's side. A prolonged resistance brings about high casualties on both sides.

We have not used up to this point a document which is worthy of special treatment as a sort of 'summary' of the main features of war and battle: a letter of Shalmaneser I containing his account of the Assyrian victory over the Hittite troops of Tudhaliya IV near Nihriya.³⁶ Notice that when writing to Shalmaneser's successor, Tudhaliya tends to idealize the past relations between the two countries according to the brotherhood pattern: 'Had he (= Shalmaneser) entered my land, or had I entered his land, we would have eaten each one the other's bread.'³⁷ Things went differently; the Assyrians entered the Hatti land with a less peaceful attitude. The letter begins with the regular challenge of the Hittite king, who claims to have suffered injury: 'Why did you reach and seize the territory of my ally? Come out and let's do battle! Otherwise I will come to do battle.'³⁸ The reply of the Assyrian king is no less classical, typically insisting on the heroic role of attacker for himself: 'Why should you come? I will come (myself) against you!'³⁹ The Assyrian army proceeds to Taidu, but before hostilities begin the Hittite king sends a messenger. By this act he casts himself as that kind of king – more arrogant than heroic – who is readier to proclaim war than carry it out.⁴⁰ The messenger brings two different kinds of letter: an unparalleled procedure, which reveals the shady and unscrupulous character of the Hittite king. At first the messenger delivers two 'hostile letters' but, upon witnessing the bellicose reaction of the Assyrian troops, follows with a 'peaceful' one. Battle is avoided and peace concluded. However, the interpretation of the peace terms is different.

The Hittite king imagines that the Assyrians will return to their own land, while the Assyrian king believes that he will have a free hand in a third state, Nihriya. Since Nihriya is allied to Hatti and an enemy of Assyria, the agreement of the two great kings to be 'enemy with the other's enemies, and allied with the other's allies' is impossible. According to his interpretation of the recent peace, Shalmaneser writes to Tudhaliya: 'Nihriya is my enemy. Why are your troops staying in Nihriya? If you are really my friend and not my enemy, why are your troops to reinforce Nihriya? I will besiege Nihriya: write to your troops to get out of Nihriya.'⁴¹ We could ourselves write the Hittite position, which is of course unrecorded in the Assyrian letter: 'Nihriya is my ally. Why are your

troops besieging Nihriya? If you are really my friend, etc.’ It is clear that the peace agreement is ineffective since the real problems have not been solved: it is just a short-term truce designed to avoid the previously threatened battle. Now one of the two contenders has to withdraw. The Hittite king does not accept the Assyrian ultimatum: ‘I will not (do that), since the Assyrian king is (already) in battle array.’⁴² The Assyrian king agrees to withdraw a considerable distance in order to allow the Hittites to withdraw too. But after a while Shalmaneser is told that Tudhaliya, instead of withdrawing, is advancing in battle array. The treacherous enemy has broken all the oaths pronounced in the name of Shamash! The Assyrian king summons his troops and stiffens their courage. In the event, he is still in time to assume the role of attacker, run into the *mêlée* at the head of his army, and obtain a complete victory.

What is striking in this text is its purpose, and the consequent relation between medium and message. The text is a letter addressed by the Assyrian king, after the victory, to the king of Ugarit and presumably to all the Hittite vassals. After a flattering heading (the form of address and greetings put the Assyrian king and the addressee at the same level), a description of the victory follows, both in its military aspects and in its legal background and moral significance. The letter, which is more usually employed as the medium of ‘symmetrical’ negotiations, is here used to celebrate a victory and exploit it in propaganda. Since the addressee of this piece of propaganda is a distant king, a letter has to be sent, but the tone and purpose are quite similar to those of the celebrative texts addressed to the inner public. The royal inscriptions and the poem of Tukulti-Ninurta provide the best parallels to this document, which merely has the heading of a letter but in other regards has all of the characteristics of a celebrative account: a ‘bulletin of victory’ containing information suitable for the vassals of the defeated king. Not even a word of explicit comment has been added by the Assyrian king to the self-evident narrative of the events. Any reader well aware of the moral and juridical rules of peace and war will clearly realize that the Hittite overlord had been condemned in the divine court before being defeated on the battlefield.

17

The Battle of Megiddo

The description of the minimal nucleus, the 'simple form' of the battle array in the Late Bronze age, is provided by a Hittite text, a passage in the Annals of Tudhaliya II: 'The city of Tiwara drew up its army against me: behind the army was a wood, and a river was flowing beyond. And I, Tudhaliya, I went to battle against it, and the gods gave it to me.'¹ The roles are clearly distinguished: one army is on the defensive, the other has to attack. The defenders are protected on two sides: the forest (in other cases a mountain, or a walled town), which is in their rear and provides a route of escape should the attack be successful; and the river, which constitutes a natural obstacle against the advance of the attacking army. The latter must launch a frontal assault, force a crossing of the river, and then overwhelm the enemy. In another text the pattern is also clear. The Kashka army is drawn up behind a river, which it assumes will give it protection against attack by the king, Hattushili III. However, despite this and despite the arrows and rocks which they shoot at him, the king is sheltered by the shield of the goddess Shaushga and is able to cross the river unhurt, and to penetrate the enemy array 'with one chariot only'.²

Viewed geometrically, the battle is the penetration of a horizontal line by a vertical wedge, and this impression is stronger when the defenders are mainly footsoldiers and the attackers are a chariot squadron. From the military point of view the defenders have to concentrate their strength at the critical moment when the attackers are seeking to cross the natural obstacle; otherwise the battle is won by the impetus of the attack and the defenders must withdraw in order to avoid major casualties. Therefore the real task is to hold (on one side) or to force (on the other) the defensive line. From the ideological point of view, the defenders are cautious and fearful: they rely on natural or artificial obstacles, they prearrange an

escape. The attackers are bold and courageous, they are indifferent to danger, they just 'go in' and win. All the battles are won by the heroic attacker. All the battles are eventually narrated by the attacker/winner.

An idea prevails among scholars that the war chariot was not actually used for frontal assaults,³ but only as a means of speedy displacement and a mobile platform for shooting arrows. It has to be noted, however, that this is contradicted by the texts, in which the heroic king 'alone on his chariot' frontally attacks the hostile army, penetrating into its ranks, and trampling upon his fallen enemies.⁴ The corresponding iconography is even more explicit.⁵ If the problem is that the horses will refuse to charge into an obstacle, it is also true that the footsoldiers will refuse to wait to be trampled upon. Who will take fright first, the horses or the men? Scholars decide for the horses, but the celebrative inscriptions and the iconic representations decide for the men – and in studying ancient ideology we have to follow the sources. The defensive formation is not too compact, for we are not yet at the age of the tactics of closed ranks employed by the hoplites of Ancient Greece. As a result, the horses are not charging against a solid obstacle, but between its loose component parts.

In any case, the main point here is the distinction between the roles of attacker and defender. This is the basic battle situation, connected with the rules of war, the challenging party being entrusted with the attack and the challenged with defence, and the encounter taking place in the defender's territory (see Chapter 16). There are no battles in which the two armies play the same role, each attacking the other. We may even say that the field battle and the town siege are two different applications of the same principle, the differences being that in the latter case there is a more obvious defensive obstacle but no avenue of escape in the event of defeat. The attacker has two possibilities, either to take the town by a 'heroic' frontal attack on the 'seventh' day, or 'in one day only',⁶ or just wait for a surrender from starvation on the 'seventh' month or year.

The description of the battle of Megiddo in the Annals of Tuthmosis III reveals a case of compromise between tactics and ideology which results in an apparent misunderstanding of the Asiatics' tactics by the Egyptians, and a real one by Egyptologists.⁷ The question 'why did the Asiatics not attack the Egyptian army from a more favourable position?' underlies the ancient narrative and is explicitly posed by modern scholars.⁸ When the Egyptian army had already invaded the territory of the king of Qadesh, the latter sent his official challenge: 'I will stand to fight against His Majesty here in Megiddo.'⁹ The roles were consequently allotted: the invading Pharaoh had to attack, the king of Qadesh had to defend, and he chose the spot for the encounter.

Then the scene of the war council takes place. Here the advice provided by the officers is cautious. The contrast between this and the decision of Pharaoh to take the direct road enables his bold attitude to be exalted. This choice, of course, is the only one fitting the heroic character of the king and his actual role as attacker:

As I live, as Ra loves me, as my father Amun favours me, as my nostrils are refreshed with life and strength, I will proceed on this Aruna road. Let him of you who so desires go on these (other) roads of which you speak, and let him of you who so desires come in the train of My Majesty, for behold, they will say, namely the foes whom Ra detests: 'Has His Majesty gone upon another road because he is afraid of us?' they will say.¹⁰

The king proceeds on the direct road in the Aruna valley, even if it is dangerous, being so narrow that 'horse has to go behind horse, and the soldiers and the (other) people likewise', and being exposed to flank attacks from the surrounding hills. But the Asiatics do not attack; they wait in Megiddo, according to the terms of their challenge.

As he had sworn in order to reassure his reluctant troops, Tuthmosis is at the head of his army, and when he reaches the other end of the valley he is still exposed to danger because the main bulk of his forces are still on the south-western end. But still the Asiatics do not attack; still they wait in Megiddo according to the terms of their challenge. Tuthmosis is now convinced by his officers to wait for the army: his own role of 'lonely attacker' would mean proceeding immediately, but he waits in order to 'protect' his troops. In reality, we have to presume that the vanguard led by the king had the task of ensuring that the way ahead was clear by reaching the other end of the valley and occupying the surrounding hills: only when the road was protected could the army proceed.

On the other side, the enemy is arranged into a typical 'horizontal' formation: a very elongated one on the eve of the battle, when it is not yet clear from which direction the Egyptian army will arrive, and still a rather elongated one on the day of the battle.¹¹ The natural obstacle that protects the Asiatic formation is provided by the Qina brook and the slopes immediately to the north of it. The escape area behind the battlefield is Megiddo itself.¹² The defenders are in the correct position. The attackers launch their ferocious assault, and Pharaoh, who is at the apex of the wedge, shatters the enemy line. The defenders withdraw and find refuge inside the walls of Megiddo. The town is besieged and will capitulate later on, without having been taken by assault.

Apart from being respectful of the rules (Mitannian chivalry had its rules of honour, like the medieval), were the Asiatic tactics really so awkward as some scholars believe? It depends on what is thought to be most important, maximizing the possibilities of success or maximizing the possibilities of escape and survival in the event of defeat. By choosing a battlefield very close to the sanctuary provided by the walled town, the Asiatic tactics maximize security. A battle in the Aruna valley would certainly have had tactical advantages but provided no avenue of escape. Now, in the different roles we have outlined, it seems obvious that the attacker has to take higher risks and rely more on courage. After all, he is in enemy territory and he knows that, should he be defeated, escape is impossible: his only task, and his only hope, is to win. But the defender, who is in his own land, is able to attach higher priority to security and survival. He hopes that he can resist the eventual siege long enough to see the foreign army give up and leave, either because of the impending winter or difficulties in supply. Megiddo was forced to capitulate, but other towns did not.

Two centuries later another, more famous, battle took place in similar circumstances, with the Egyptians again disconcerted by the conduct of the Asiatics. This time, however, it was not because they followed the rules 'too much', but because they did not follow them at all.¹³ The battle of Qadesh, between the invading army of Ramesses II and the Hittite army of Muwatalli, waiting in his own land, has been the subject of so many studies that all should have been said already.¹⁴ But a more conscious separation of the ideological themes and the tactical procedures may help us to understand better the development of the military encounter. The problem is not to sift away ideology in order to discover the 'real facts', but on the contrary to better appreciate ideology through an evaluation of its factual basis.

Two main polemical themes flow through all the narrative: one against the army (as unreliable) and another against the Hittites (as disloyal). Both polemics highlight the heroic conduct of Pharaoh, who won the battle alone, trusting only in the support of the god Amun.¹⁵ And both polemics are necessary because *in fact* the battle was not won. It is true that Ramesses won a personal skirmish, but the Hittites fulfilled their aim in resisting, and the invading army had to withdraw. Back in Egypt, Ramesses had to explain the failure, and his propaganda adopted three lines of defence: first, the battle was actually won and the Hittites were forced to ask for life and peace; secondly, Pharaoh personally won, his own position is safe, and his own responsibility is not to be confused with that of the others; and thirdly, failure was a result of the cowardly

behaviour of the army in addition to the disloyal conduct of the Hittites. The polemic against the army is the most important for inner Egyptian problems,¹⁶ but we are concerned here with external polemics against the state's enemies. Whatever the inner problems may have been, the Egyptian nation was united in despising the enemy.

The theme of the 'vile' and 'treacherous' enemy is quite normal (see Chapter 6), and the picture of Hittite conduct at Qadesh fits perfectly into this stereotype. But the insistence on it requires an explanation because a mere hint of contempt at such behaviour would be enough if a disloyal enemy had actually been defeated. At Qadesh, however, the Hittites won (or 'seriously threatened our victory', in the celebrative Egyptian version), so it became necessary to demonstrate that this happened only because they were disloyal and broke the rules of war.

The first cause of trouble for the Egyptian army is that the Hittites did not send an official challenge indicating the place of the encounter, so that Ramesses is forced to proceed northwards without a clear idea of where exactly to find them. The additional episode in which the Hittites used Shasu informers to provide false information is irrelevant in itself because the Egyptians could not seriously hope to reach Aleppo without meeting any resistance. Nevertheless, it is cited as further evidence that the Hittites failed completely to meet the requirements of the correct challenge.

When Ramesses reaches Qadesh he knows that the Hittite army is there, and encamps in preparation for the battle. However, the whole narrative seems to imply that the Egyptian army, going northwards, was surprised in a colossal ambush by the enemy army. Hidden behind the city of Qadesh, it appeared suddenly, like a playful child from behind a tree. Modern critiques have been partly taken in by this propagandistic view, which from the strategic and tactical point of view is completely unbelievable. Of course, each of the two armies was aware of the location of the other, and even if no official challenge had been sent, it was obvious that the encounter had to take place the day after, when the dispositions for the battle had been completed. The classical battlefield was available, with the Orontes river and the walled town of Qadesh (with its promise of sanctuary) nearby. Since the territory was their own, the rules prescribed the role of defender to the Hittites; the Egyptians had to attack.

But, reversing the allotted roles, the Hittites themselves attack! They also ignore the rules that require that the attack be made the day after (since the current day is already almost past), and by means of a frontal assault rather than one aimed at a flank. At first, from a wooded area at the Orontes ford, they attack the Egyptian rear army while it is still marching;

this is a classical place for a defence but 'unfair' for an attack. Secondly, they also attack the Egyptian vanguard but on one of its flanks, and when it is not 'ready'. This is an irregular way to fight a battle. The old Mitannian charioteers were much more sensitive to honour and civilization than the utilitarian Hittites! The day after, a regular battle takes place, with the Egyptians attacking but failing to scatter the Hittite forces; consequently, there are high casualties on both sides. Unable to force its enemies to withdraw into the walled town, the Egyptian army has no alternative but to turn back.¹⁷

A third major episode in the fighting between the Egyptians and the Asiatics to which reference might usefully be made is the battle of Ramesses III against the Sea Peoples.¹⁸ Here, for the first time, the Egyptians are officially the defenders: they await their invading enemies from a favourable position, on the sea shore, and are able to arrest their advance. The Egyptians win in the classical manner of defenders: without a heroic assault, just by resisting.¹⁹

There is an evident worsening of the Egyptian position as the second of these three episodes succeeds the first and the third succeeds the second. From the ideological point of view a movement takes place from a successful attack in the heroic style, to a failed attack, to a successful defence. And from the point of view of what actually happened there is a shift from an expansionist phase, to a static one, to a retreat on the very borders of the inner country. The decline is evident in the increase in the celebrative effort in the opposite direction; indeed, it is emphasized by the contrast with it. The Megiddo victory, in all its glory, gives the impression of being understated if compared to the bombastic celebration of the Qadesh failure and the paranoid insistence on the annihilation of enemies and the restoration of security after the threatened invasions of the Libyans and the Sea Peoples had been halted. As usual, propaganda and reality make up a 'zero-sum' game, with the former compensating for what is missing in the latter. A possible 'fourth phase', namely an unsuccessful defence, does not belong to the kind of events to be narrated – at least, not by 'us'.

18

Peace as Mutual Recognition

In the Hittite treaties, foreign countries are either enemies (*nakru*)¹ or friends/allies (*šalmu*). Only those integrated into the Hittite political system by a formal pact fall into the second category; if they 'rebel', they too become enemies. To the group of enemies belong 'Hurri, Misri (= Egypt), Karduniash (= Babylonia), Ashtata, Alshe, and every enemy country close to the border of your (= the vassal's) land, which is enemy of the Hatti land'. To the friends/allies belongs 'every country close to the border of your land, which is an ally of the Hatti land – Mukish, Qadesh, Nuhashe – but rebels and becomes enemy of the Hatti land'.² The act of rebellion is here expressed by the verb *saḫāru* ('to change direction'), with the same implications that we have already seen for *nabalkutu* ('to transgress') in the middle-Assyrian royal inscriptions (Chapter 12).

A partial yet significant coincidence may be noticed between the lists of 'enemy' countries and the lists of countries whose kings are peers (*miḫrūti*) of the Hittite great king (see Chapter 5). The overlap of the sorting principles of rank (parity vs. subordination) and kind of relationship (friend vs. enemy) is only partial, relationships being determined not by rank but by whether or not there exists a formal agreement whose basic principle is 'with my friends be friend, with my enemies be enemy'.³ This basic principle is contained in pacts between those unequal in rank as well as in treaties between peers. In the first case its application is not open to doubt, since the status of enemy/friend is decided by the great king and has to be accepted by the small king – hence the detailed lists quoted above. In the second case, as we have seen (Chapter 16), the perspectives of the two partners are of equal value yet can be applied differently, leading in consequence to rival interpretations and further conflicts. From this point of view, a treaty with a subordinate is much more stable and explicit than a treaty between equals. Moreover, no subordination is

possible without a formal treaty, while between 'foreign' states the existence of a treaty is only one possibility – hence the partial coincidence of enemies with independent kings.

In any case, the existence of a formal treaty, ratified by an oath sworn in the name of the gods, transforms an 'enemy' into a 'friend'. (All foreign states are enemies until proven to the contrary.) Thus the state of peace is brought about by a conventional and cultural act. But, in contrast to the centralized perspective, the passage from 'natural' enmity to 'cultural' peace is not obtained by eliminating the rebels (viewed as qualitatively different), but by defining precisely the kind of behaviour which a state of friendship requires from both parties.

In both conceptions, war is a preliminary to peace. But in the centralized perspective it prepares the way to peace by extinguishing rebellion; in the symmetrical perspective it does so by deciding the issue of a legal tussle and, in the process, establishing the rules of coexistence. In fact, war is only a more drastic way of advancing a case. When all the rhetorical and juridical arguments have been tested and proved ineffective, war will decide who is right and establish a peaceful relationship: 'Peace cannot be made without conflict ... Good relations will not come out without a fight.'⁴ Before and after the treaty is concluded, the normal relations of enmity between bordering states prevail: battles over disputed zones, intrusions into neighbouring territories, problems of refugees, mutual threats to inner stability, problems of murder and theft, etc. A treaty solves all of these problems, in part by establishing technical procedures (extradition, compensations for murders, etc.), in part just by expressing the political will to maintain friendship:

Starting from today, Niqmadu king of Ugarit and Aziru king of Amurru have made a reciprocal oath: the past disputations of Aziru against Ugarit ... in the (very) day this oath is established, they have expired. From all these disputations, as the sun is innocent, so is innocent Aziru toward Niqmadu and Abdi-Hebat, toward Ugarit and Siyannu.⁵

In this case Aziru renounces his claim to annex Siyannu (the southern part of the Ugaritic kingdom, bordering on Amurru) in exchange for a vague 'protectorate' over the entire kingdom. In other cases, local struggles are decided by the intervention of a great king called in by one of the contenders:

May the Sun, the great king my lord, rescue me from the hand of the enemy. I am a servant of the Sun, the great king my lord: with the enemy of my lord I am enemy, with the friend of my lord I am friend.⁶

The result is a couple of quite similar vassal treaties: one with the defeated kingdom, since it has been defeated; and one with the king who invoked the help, since in so doing he submitted of his own free will. In whatever way the subordination is obtained, the formal agreement is the same: a treaty, a tribute, a loyalty oath. Among the many possible forms of subordination, the small king has chosen one, or has been forced into one. It is a juridical convention, an inherited state of things or the result of a struggle; it is not the shift from chaos to cosmos, it is not a change in the natural qualities of the vassal.

In fact the Hittite vassal treaty differs from the Egyptian loyalty oath. The latter is an unconditional surrender: the local kinglet swears 'never to rebel again'; the Egyptian overlord does not swear at all (see Chapter 14). By contrast, the Asiatic vassal treaty is a reciprocal agreement, sworn by both parties, the vassal and the overlord alike. The clauses are effective in both directions, especially where mutual protection is concerned. The difference between a treaty agreed by equals and one agreed by greater and lesser kings is a modern distinction⁷ more than an ancient reality. The reality is a different division of parity and subordination within the same category of loyalty oaths, loyalty being not the same as servitude, since the overlord also has to be loyal. Moreover, the guarantee of the treaty is entrusted to the gods, since the partners – no matter how different in power and rank – belong to the same human level and need a reference point outside and above themselves. In the Egyptian oath no god is necessary, besides Pharaoh himself.

In the continuum of treaty relationships between the two extremes of perfect parity and complete subordination, most interesting are the problematic cases. The Shunashura treaty⁸ is a masterpiece of ambiguity, in which a substantial subordination is obtained through a cunning exploitation and deformation of symmetry. More examples could be brought forth⁹ to the effect that reciprocity does not necessarily imply parity. Reciprocity is a general theory suggesting that nobody is self-sufficient in political relationships, nobody can just impose his own will without granting anything in return. Parity is a form of reciprocity, but subordination is another form, the vertical stratification of ranks being combined with the horizontal mutuality of obligations.

The focal matter, from the formal point of view, is that two-sided engagements may be either mutually formulated (in a reciprocal relationship between equals), or granted by the higher partner (in a reciprocal relationship between superior and inferior). In the treaties between equals the heading puts both partners on the same level in their role as issuers of the text, as well as in the implementation of the practical

engagements which the treaties contain. Syrian and Anatolian treaties of the fifteenth century BC begin with the formula: 'When X and Y pronounced the oath by the gods, they stipulated this pact between them'.¹⁰ However, in the 'transitional' formulation of the Shunashura treaty, the great king singles out his position as the sole issuer of the text: 'Seal of Tudhaliya: when together with Shunashura they pronounced the oath by the gods, they stipulated this treaty between them'.¹¹ Later on, starting with Shuppiluliuma's reign, the single-source formulation of the edict completely prevails: 'So speaks X the great king, king of Hatti, beloved of the Storm God, the son of X, the great king, king of Hatti, the hero'.

This heading is immediately followed by the exposition of the facts whereby the small king became a vassal: 'As to you, Duppi-Teshub: Aziru was your grandfather, and submitted to my father, etc.'; 'As to you, Niqmepa: I brought you back in your land and I put you as king on your father's throne, etc.'; 'As to you, Shaushgamuwa: I, the Sun, have taken you by my hand and have made you my son-in-law, etc.'¹² The course of the historical events has produced a relationship of subordination that now finds formal expression in the treaty. The treaty is of advantage to both sides, but is issued by the great king. And if a vassal is particularly reluctant to understand this basic principle, a special treatment may be applied:

'This tablet that I have made for you, Alakshandu, should be read before you three times a year, (so that) you remember well these words, that they are by no means reciprocal, but are from the Hatti land'.¹³

The vassal is placed on the same level as the king's sons or high court or army officials:

'Now you, Huqqana, recognize only my Sun as overlord. And recognize my son whom I, my Sun, designate: "everyone shall recognize this one", and thus distinguish among (his brothers). Furthermore, recognize the (other) sons of mine, his brothers, and my own brothers, in brotherhood and in comradeship'.¹⁴

The relationship outlined in this and other texts is one of reciprocal 'acknowledgement' or 'recognition' (Hittite *šak/sek*;¹⁵ West-Semitic *yd'*).¹⁶ The overlord recognizes the vassal as his vassal, while the vassal recognizes the overlord as his sole overlord. Equal dependants of the same overlord have to recognize and respect each other as 'brothers', or at any rate as

'peers', and must not enlarge one at the expense of another:

I, the Sun, have given to you, Manapa-Tarhunta, the land of the Sheha river and the land of Appawiya: this will be your land and you have to protect it. But I gave to Mashhuiluwa the land of Mira and the land of Kuwaliya; and I gave to Targashnalli the land of Hapalla: this will be their land and they will protect it.¹⁷

The network of reciprocal acknowledgements ensures that everybody may be certain of his position in a complex political world. The world is not 'geometrically' shaped and clearly structured as in the centralized view: it is a 'historically' changing world, always under pressure from different forces against which solidarity is the only guarantee of effective resistance.

This kind of reciprocal 'knowledge' as recognition of everybody's rights, is far removed from the Egyptian idea that peoples either 'do not know' (*īm*) Egypt,¹⁸ or have to surrender and submit as soon as they do know it. Even in the most famous episodes of the Egyptian-Hittite relationship, reciprocal acknowledgement was far from automatic. The sequence of war (the battle of Qadesh) and peace (the Ramesses-Hattushili treaty) was made to fit the traditional views of the two countries in almost opposite ways. For the Hittites, the treaty had to 'cancel' all the previous quarrels, and put the former enemies on a footing of parity and brotherhood. For the Egyptians, the peace was begged by the Hittites as a consequence of their defeat; in the celebrative monuments the text of the treaty was inscribed next to the reliefs celebrating the battle of Qadesh or other Syrian expeditions.¹⁹ When the boast of Ramesses that he had defeated single-handedly the entire Hittite army came to Hattushili's ears, his protestations remained useless (see Chapter 11).

Respect for the existence of different political entities reaches its peak in two different cases. One is the Hittite acknowledgement that even the barbarian peoples, who lack the political structures of state and kingship, must not only be recognized as political entities but also enjoy respect for their special forms of political organization. The treaties with the Kashka tribes are sworn by a long line of local chiefs, each one representing a small community or an extended family, and collectively representing a political counterpart to the Hittite king: 'All of you, people of Ishmerikka, must stand by the oath: (the names follow). Come here, people of Ishmerikka, make your women and children and relatives come here and stand by the oath and swear all together.'²⁰

The other case is the recognition of dissidence inside the kingdom itself.

In a letter of Rib-Adda, the petty king of Byblos, the existence of different political views is frankly admitted, and friends and enemies are put on the same level: 'One half of the city loves the sons of Abdi-Ashirta, its other half loves my lord.'²¹ With the enemies numberless and united against the faithful but lonely servant of Pharaoh, the decisive step is finally taken: the enemies are now seen as 'friends' among themselves, and the subject (Rib-Adda) as being (their) 'enemy'. This conclusion was not the product of a search for objectivity but of harsh psychological pressure. This finally resulted in Rib-Adda's adoption of the 'other' point of view, in displacement of the subject from the centre of the world, through a multicentred world, into the periphery of a world whose centre was elsewhere: 'In Amurru everyone is allied, I am enemy.'²²

19

The Ideology of Protection

Pharaoh, as the 'wall' or the 'shield' of his own army, as the 'sleepless' watcher over the security of the country, is a person who himself needs no help from any human but whose protection is necessary to everyone else. The separation between king and common mankind is sharp: fear, and anxiety for protection or assistance, are quite extraneous to Pharaoh's character. Besides being a 'lone attacker' (Chapter 11), he is also a 'lone defender', while his people and country can relax and sleep.

The Asiatic system is different, since political relations are an enlargement of the mechanisms of mutual support and protection that are typical of the family and local community. The idea of protection (Akkadian *naṣāru*) is fundamental, and it is a reciprocal concept: protection goes out and comes in from every direction; each element in the system can sustain itself only through a generalized acceptance and support by the others. The king is the centre of the system, all the two-sided relations of protection spring from and converge on him. But his position is dependent on the whole network: he protects but he is also protected, he grants the throne to his vassals in order to secure his own throne, he grants a post to his officials and subjects in order to obtain their loyalty. A passage in the Talmi-Sharruma treaty is most insistent on the reciprocal character of protection and help:

The sons of Talmi-Sharruma shall protect the sons of my Sun Murshili, king of Hatti; and the sons of my Sun shall not depose the sons of Talmi-Sharruma. My Sun, the great king, shall be the aid for Talmi-Sharruma king of Aleppo; and Talmi-Sharruma king of Aleppo, shall be the aid for my Sun, the great king, king of Hatti. The sons of my Sun Murshili shall be the aid for the sons of Talmi-Sharruma; and the sons of Talmi-Sharruma shall be the aid for the sons of my Sun. All of us, we

are the descendants of Shuppiluliuma, the great king: so let our house be one! ... Talmi-Sharruma king of Aleppo shall protect my Sun Murshili, the great king, king of Hatti; and my Sun Murshili shall protect Talmi-Sharruma. No one shall take anything away from the hands of Talmi-Sharruma and from the hands of his son and grandson, and the son and grandson of Talmi-Sharruma will detain the kingship of Aleppo.¹

The insistence is here obvious because of the strict kinship ties between the two kings. But the same concept obtains generally, even where no personal kinship is attested. Here is the standard formulation:

As to you, Niqmepa, I brought you back to your land and I let you sit as king on your father's throne. The land into which I brought you back and you, Niqmepa, with your land, you are my servants. From today and in the future, you must protect the Hatti king your lord and the Hatti land. As for you, Niqmepa, your person, your head, your women, your troops and your land are valuable things, also the person of the king, the head of the king, the sons of the king and the Hatti land will be valuable things for you forever.²

Protection has different nuances and applications. The most concrete and immediate application is the supply of military aid. The technical term *rēšūtu* 'aid' defines the service provided by the military elite of the *maryannu* (charioteers) to their king,³ and the same term is applied to the military contingents supplied by a small king to his overlord and vice versa, and also between small kings.⁴ The bond is a total one, extending to the sacrifice of life: 'The (Hittite) lords who fought for Madduwatta, they could even have been killed for Madduwatta.'⁵ As the great king's men risk their lives for the protection of his vassal, so the vassal has to risk his life for the protection of his overlord.

Apart from military intervention, 'protection' materializes most frequently in keeping the king informed of news of any developments that could undermine the stability of the kingdom and threaten the personal safety of the sovereign. The general meaning of 'protection' as loyalty to the overall system of reciprocal support is well indicated by use of the same word both for the physical protection afforded by great kings to small ones and vice versa, and for its symbolic expression. In the latter case, the treaty partners have to 'protect' the words of the treaty, while they in their turn will be 'protected' by the gods who are its witnesses and guarantors.

But the most delicate and decisive moment, when all the protection that can be afforded by gods and men together becomes essential, is that of the succession to the throne, the transmission of power. The overlord engages himself to protect the vassal's descendants, and in particular to secure the vassal's throne to his designated heir. But in his turn the overlord relies on his vassals to ensure that his own throne is inherited by the one among his many sons who is the legitimate and designated heir. The dead king has no other guarantee that his decision will be respected than the strength of the network of reciprocal loyalty and protection that he has been able to build during his lifetime.

This also holds true among kings who are equal in rank: 'We are men (that is, mortal beings): if someone arrives at his fate, the survivor shall protect his sons.'⁶ But the influence of distant kings is less effective than that of the inner structure of the kingdom: palace officials, army officers, members of the royal family are the key elements when it comes to deciding whether or not the last wish of the former king will be observed. During the Late Bronze period, kingship is in principle accessible to any person of royal lineage, each king choosing his successor from among them.⁷ The rules of succession follow the general rules of inheritance, and in the Late Bronze the fixed privileges of the first-born are no longer relevant, the personal qualities of the son and the personal preference of the father being the determining factors. As to kingship, when the personal qualities of an ambitious pretender go unacknowledged, he may challenge the king's choice. Usurpations and dynastic struggles are common at the time.⁸ The insistence on the need to respect the king's choice of successor that is found both in the vassal treaties and the loyalty oaths of court officials is an evident symptom of a situation potentially out of control:

So speaks Tudhaliya, the great king, king of Hatti: You, chiefs, have to swear to my Sun as follows: 'We will protect the Sun as to lordship, and we will protect the Sun's sons and grandsons and great grandsons as to lordship'... My Sun has many brothers and many relatives. The Hatti land is filled with descendants of the kingship. In Hatti the offspring of Shuppiluliuma, of Murshili, of Muwatalli and of Hattushili are numerous. You will not recognize anyone else for lordship. As to lordship you must protect only sons, grandsons and descendants of Tudhaliya.⁹

The same Tudhaliya quotes as conduct *not* to be emulated the episode in which his own father usurped the throne, although this implies that his own accession was irregular:

Do not act like Mashturi! Mashturi, who was king of the Sheha river land, Muwatalli took him and made him his brother-in-law by giving him his sister in marriage, and installed him as king of the Sheha river land. When Muwatalli died, Urhi-Teshub son of Muwatalli became king. But my father took the kingship away from Urhi-Teshub. And Mashturi joined the plot, and he whom Muwatalli had made his brother-in-law, did not protect his son Urhi-Teshub but rather sided with my father (saying:) 'Should I protect a bastard? Should I side with a bastard son?' Now, will you ever act like Mashturi?¹⁰

In his quest for protection the Hittite king does not refrain from describing situations in which his very survival is contingent on the protection of his dependants:

If the king is preoccupied because not a single palace official is left, and nobody is left to yoke the horses, and he has not even one house where to enter: in such a situation you have even more to be concerned with your king ... If the situation arrives at a point of seriousness for the king that the chariot-driver jumps down from the chariot, that the chamber-valet flees from the chamber, that not even a dog is left, the more so you have to be concerned with your king.¹¹

At the end of the empire, Shuppiluliuma II seems to be mainly preoccupied by the progressive deterioration of loyalty and protection on the part of his vassals and officials.¹² The king – we might say – is sleepless not in order to protect his subjects but out of fear that the protection that he should enjoy in return is insufficient. Abandoned by everybody, left all alone, the king reveals not his self-sufficiency but a complete dependence on the whole community predicated on widespread acceptance and support of his role. His role as king does not spring from any qualitative superiority relative to the common man but from his centrality in the social network.

The network that ensures the solidity of a state formation and safeguards the king's position by making possible rivals protectors instead is quite fit to be transferred to inter-state relations. In this case, the mixture of friendship and oppression, of aloofness and intervention, so typical of the system of 'protection', tends to shift towards a 'protectorate'. The pact between the rich but weak kingdom of Ugarit and the bellicose kingdom of Amurru – the former paying for, the latter providing armed protection – is a case in point.¹³ Of course, protection is not always really requested or welcomed by the protected person, who may be so

intimidated by the protector that he is unable to refuse it. In granting his protection to Mashhuiluwa, Murshili is well aware that the vassal would prefer to do without it: 'I gave him 600 men as his personal body-guard, and I told him: "Since the people of Mira are evil, these 600 men will be your body-guard. They shall not plot with the people of Mira, but you will not plot against them"'.¹⁴

At the inter-state level protection may also be best exploited at the moment of succession to the throne. When Tushratta dies, Shuppiluliuma feels authorized to interfere in the succession to the Mitanni throne by 'protecting' one of the possible heirs, namely his own son-in-law Shattiwaza.¹⁵ When Kadashman-Turgu dies, Hattushili feels entitled to write a letter to the Babylonian court, recalling (or just imagining) a promise of his to the deceased 'brother' to protect his heir, and continues in a rather heavy tone: 'If you will not protect the offspring of my brother as to lordship, I will become your enemy, I will come and enter the land of Karduniash. But if some enemy rises against you, or if you have some problems, write to me, I will come to your help.'¹⁶ The reaction of the Babylonian court is firm, the prime minister rejecting the overbearing tone of the proposals: 'You are not writing according to brotherhood: you want to oppress us as your servants.'¹⁷ The young Babylonian king, already adequately protected by his energetic minister, has no need for a foreign protector. Hattushili must confine himself to advising on how to acquire military renown (see Chapter 12). The conduct of Hattushili at the death of Shalmaneser is exactly the same: a letter to the Assyrian courtiers and to the most influential of them, Baba-ah-iddina, hints about the need for 'protection', and some self-serving advice on how to obtain military renown.¹⁸

Assyria and Babylonia were well aware of the dangers of 'protection' taken to its logical conclusion. A century before, the Assyrian king Ashur-uballit had no time to 'protect', and so had to 'avenge' Kara-Hardash, king of Babylon and his grandson on his mother's side, killed by his own troops. The Assyrian army entered Babylonia and Ashur-uballit imposed as king the 'small' Kurigalzu imagining that he would be able to keep easy control over him.¹⁹ But once grown up, the small Kurigalzu will cause more than one affliction to his Assyrian protectors. Some decades later, the Elamite intervention in Babylonia will have a similar background of dynastic marriages, since the daughters of the Kassite kings had been repeatedly married to the Elamite kings, generation after generation, with a cumulative effect on the 'right' (or pretension) to interfere.²⁰

It is instructive to compare the Egyptian and Asiatic systems in regard to 'protective' intervention, for this is a topic on which they have very

different views. At the level of relations between great kings, the opportunity for such a comparison is provided by the treaty of Hattushili and Ramesses. The treaty is almost completely symmetrical, the main difference being related precisely to the protection of heirs. The clause goes in one direction only:

The son of Hattushili, king of Hatti, shall be made king of Hatti in place of his father Hattushili, after the many years of Hattushili, king of Hatti. And if the people of Hatti commit a sin against him, then Ramesses, the king of Egypt, will send infantry and chariotry to take revenge on them.²¹

There is no reciprocal clause to the advantage (so to speak) of Ramesses. Now, first of all Hattushili (who knew the situation better than us) seems more preoccupied with the loyalty of his courtiers than with that of the Egyptian troops – who after all might be tempted to re-enthroné Urhi-Teshub, the former king of Hatti now in Egypt as an exile. Secondly, and above all, Ramesses has no problem with his own succession, and even if he had, the very idea that his decision could be ‘protected’ by a foreign king and a foreign army is so incompatible with Egyptian ideology that the whole symmetry of the treaty has been ruined by his rejection of this perspective.

When the problem of protection is applied to the relations between Pharaoh and his vassals, the interaction is even more complicated. The Asiatic small kings were accustomed to their overlord’s protection in return for their loyalty: otherwise, there would be no point in being loyal in the first place.²² This is the very essence of the political relations in Syria-Palestine, and the Amarna letters are filled with pleas for help, rescue and protection by vassals who claim to be ‘faithful servants’ of Pharaoh, thus implying their right to be adequately protected against their enemies. However, these requests remained unanswered. Pharaoh is ‘silent’, thereby showing his complete lack of interest in the problem²³ and giving the impression that he sees no difference between loyal vassals and traitors, between servants and brigands.

The Egyptian conception was in fact totally different. The small kings do not have to protect Pharaoh for he needs no protection; he in his turn does not engage in protecting them. The role of the small kings is to ‘protect’ (*naṣāru* is always used) the post entrusted to them: in other words, they have to maintain it in full readiness for use by the central administration. Beyond the temporary holders of these thrones, there is a permanent and rational organization: the state officials live and act

through integration into the organization, not through the exploitation of personal relations. Pharaoh does not give posts as personal livings to heirs, but ensures the functioning of the posts by entrusting them to responsible persons. And the official does not engage in ensuring the throne to the king's son, but in ensuring the correct functioning of the bureaucratic procedures entrusted to him.

The standard letters exchanged between Egyptian state officials normally contained exhortations to be alert, behave well and perform one's job as carefully as possible. And a fixed exhortation was to keep in good order the post entrusted to one's care. When these exhortations had to be translated and extended to the Syro-Palestinian kinglets, the verb *našāru* 'to protect' was selected to cover a whole range of Egyptian verbs. The result was to evoke in the addressees' minds the sphere of political protection in which they were particularly interested, and to stimulate resentment at the lack of any similar interest in it on the part of the Egyptians. The standard Egyptian exhortation 'pay attention to what you are doing' was translated into Akkadian as 'protect yourself', and received reactions of the kind 'How can I protect myself? You have to rescue me from the hands of my enemies' or the like. Similarly the standard exhortation to 'keep in order/protect the post of the king which is with you' received reactions of the kind 'You must provide and send me the victuals and garrison troops necessary to keep the city safe until the Egyptian troops arrive' and so on. Summing up: exhortations to be efficient, quite stereotyped among Egyptian officials, were misunderstood in the framework of rescue from external assaults.

The semantic equivocations and the difficulties in mutual understanding were not devoid of major consequences. As a general rule, and in contrast to the position of their northern colleagues under Hittite rule, neither the thrones of Pharaoh's vassals nor the system of regular succession enjoyed protection, whether the threats to them came from within or without their kingdoms. A dispensation in which the overlord's engagement to protect his faithful servants was the essential factor of stability obviously became unstable when left without this guarantee. Political instability, fragmentation and internal struggles were much more possible and frequent in the Egyptian south than in the Hittite north of the region. The Egyptian alternatives, either to impose its own cosmos (in this case: the impersonal, rational, bureaucratic administration) or to consider the barbarians as irremediably chaotic, proved insufficiently flexible and insufficiently sensitive to the fact that the periphery also has its own rules and its own rationality.

20

The Ideology of Brotherhood

With its unmistakable suggestion of domination, the 'protection' metaphor, even if reciprocal and multi-directional, is best reserved for unequal relationships: those between a great and a small king, or between a king and his officials. Where peer relations are concerned, it is much better to employ another metaphor, also springing from family and small group relationships, namely, the metaphor of 'brotherhood' (*alḥūtū*).¹ The legal procedure of 'adoption in brotherhood' was so common in the Late Bronze age that the metaphor had no problem in being perfectly understood and widely accepted. 'Brotherhood' is a conventional relationship, but it has the same force and meaning as one of blood. It is therefore one that is perfectly convenient for the expression of a political alliance between peers, emphasizing (in comparison to other more technical terms)² the personal and voluntary involvement of the partners. Moreover, intermarriage between royal families was intensive enough to supply a further incentive and justification for using the metaphor. Many kings were in fact linked by brother-in-law relationships, and many more were always involved in negotiations with this end in view: 'Are you not looking for brotherhood and good relations, in order to keep closer each other, when you write to me about marriage? And I, just for that, for brotherhood and good relations, in order to keep closer each other, I write to you about marriage.'³

The cumulative effect of intermarriage and conventional brotherhood is the ground for considering all the royal houses as belonging to a unique extended family in an international setting. The class feeling, the consciousness of the homologous structure of the political hierarchy in every kingdom, produce a horizontal solidarity no less important than the vertical 'national' solidarity which is sharply fractured by the basic distinction between lords and servants.

Kings exchanging correspondence call each other 'brother' or less frequently 'colleague', and define their alliance as a 'brotherhood', a 'goodness (of relations)' (*tābūtu*),⁴ even a 'friendship' or 'love' (*ra'amūtu*).⁵ They insist on the idea of 'loving' each other, 'enjoying' and 'not afflicting' each other's heart, sharing resources and gratifying each other's desires.

If a difference in age should make the brotherhood metaphor inappropriate, the image of a father/son relationship is used instead; this is just a sign of personal respect with no political implications. When the royal Ugaritic couple address a high Hittite official as 'father',⁶ they are not implying any political subordination; they just wish to honour an old man. The use of the term 'son' as a form of address is also devoid of political significance, though it savours of an irritating 'paternalism'. When a Hittite official addresses a young and recently enthroned Ugaritic king as his 'son', his object is to make him understand, from the first line of the message, that a novice such as him has to pay more attention and respect to older people.⁷ Similarly, when Apophis addresses the recently enthroned king of Kush as 'son',⁸ this does not imply any Hyksos 'sovereignty' over Kush, only the paternalistic attitude of an older king who considers himself more authoritative and more important. Suzerainty is expressed by the lord/servant terminology.

Within the terminology of the family, the brotherhood metaphor is particularly appropriate for the political world because it does not deter 'brothers' from quarrelling. The Late Bronze is a typical period of brotherly rivalry and quarrels, basically over inheritance problems.⁹ The traditional, mechanical procedures associated with property and role transmission from father to son, predicated on the privileged status of the first-born, had been eroded by legal and economic changes that left more and more space to personal qualities and achievements. 'There is no first-born nor cadet', state the inheritance documents of the time; property will go 'to the one who will honour them (= the parents)'.¹⁰ Legal documents are full of brothers quarrelling over inheritance rights. Historical records and literary tales are filled with heroic younger brothers making bids to seize their father's throne or dispossessing their older brothers. Kingship, of course, is not the sort of property that can be divided into equal shares.

The metaphor of brotherhood, therefore, is perfectly suited to the political needs of the time: on the one side the theoretical and quite idyllic model of mutual love, on the other the occurrence of endless quarrels and rivalries. The very same metaphor may be upheld or discarded, according to the needs of the argument. A king of Amurru pretends that his brotherhood with the Ugarit king is not just a convention, but a physical reality – a fact that we know to be untrue:

My brother, look: I and you we are brothers. Sons of a single man we are brothers. Why should we not be in good terms with each other? Whatever desire you will write to me, I will satisfy it; and you will satisfy my desires. We form a unit.¹¹

But when relations become critical, it is easy to reject the metaphor as being 'not true':

Why should I write to you in brotherhood? Are we perhaps sons of the same mother? Since my father and my grandfather did not write to the king of Assyria in brotherhood, so do not write to me in brotherhood, you too.¹²

The Hittite king has reluctantly to accept the Assyrian king as a 'great king'; this is a formal definition, based on factual evidence that cannot be denied. But he refuses the terminology of brotherhood, which is a voluntary option implying personal agreement and is too easy to ridicule if clearly inappropriate. Yet the Assyrian offers of brotherhood, alternating with episodes of military aggression, produced their effect through time. Some decades later, Tudhaliya will remind the young Tukulti-Ninurta, newly enthroned, of the touching last wish of his father Shalmaneser: 'Become (sons) of a single father and mother!'¹³

The Egyptian kings became accustomed to the brotherhood metaphor in dealing with the Asiatic kings, and especially in obtaining their women. They tolerated the metaphor as a necessary diplomatic tool, and even tolerated being addressed as 'brother' by the minor king of Alashiya. But full absorption into this 'family atmosphere' only arrived in Egypt with the treaty – a treaty of equals – between Hattushili III and Ramesses II. After the conclusion of the treaty and the marriage, a complete set of letters was exchanged between the members of the two royal families: kings, queens and princes.¹⁴ These letters emphasize brotherly relations and the 'unity' between the two countries finally reached: 'They (= the two kings) are allied in a good alliance, and they are brothers in a good brotherhood, forever'; 'In that day two great countries became a single country, and you two great kings, you have become a single brotherhood'; 'to let two great countries become a single country forever'.¹⁵

This 'unit(y)' (*išṭēnūtu*), brought about by intermarriage and brotherhood, potentially has different implications for the Hittites and the Egyptians. In the Asiatic environment, the idea of *išṭēnūtu* is basically that of the coupling of two functionally identical elements: for example, a pair of earrings, shoes or wheels.¹⁶ However, it may also evoke the image of

‘undivided brothers’ who keep their property under common management.¹⁷ The concept is therefore quite banal and easily accepted. But on the Egyptian side it had important ideological and theological implications. The ‘union of the two lands’ (*sm’ t’wy*) took place in the mythical time in the past when the functioning world was created by gods and ancestors.¹⁸ Egypt was originally founded by joining the two lands – Delta and Valley – into a political unity that always retains the memory of its dual origin and nature. The other, external, lands are different and not comparable; they have another name (being *h’swt* and not *t’w*, cf. Chapter 1). To imagine now that Egypt (‘the union of both *t’w*-lands’) may become a component of a larger unity (*ištēnūtu*) in which a foreign *h’swt*-land is treated as an equal element means to have taken more than one step toward full acceptance of symmetry.

Part III

Circulation of Goods

21

Priority and Continuity of the Redistributive Pattern

It has already been stressed in the Introduction that Polanyi's patterns of reciprocity and redistribution are rather interpretive than descriptive of reality. They do not point out two separate sets of facts, but can be used alternatively with reference to the same facts – of course with different, even opposed, communicative aims and results. A phenomenon as complex and multifaceted as the inter-state circulation of goods contains features that fit particularly well into either pattern. Today, different perspectives are commonly used in order to provide as thorough an analysis as possible of a complex historical situation. But this approach was already evident in the ancient documents, where state interaction is viewed with aims and perspectives that vary from case to case – though it is not surprising that we never find here any unbiased, well-balanced analysis for the sake of 'history'. The written documentation on international trade in the Late Bronze period does not consist of collections of 'data' but of interpretations provided by the actors.

The two basic socio-political and economic situations into which reciprocity and redistribution fit best are those represented by inter-personal or small group relationships (exchange of gifts and work, mutual aid) and administrative organization (centralization of surplus through taxation and *corvée*). These had already long been a part of the common experience both of the royal palaces and the population as a whole. A more complex and unusual phenomenon like inter-state trade can be understood and recorded according to either model. The palace scribes had at their disposal two solutions: either to enlarge the redistributive pattern from the properly administered inner country to include the surrounding areas, or – by viewing every state as a single person – to transfer the reciprocity pattern from its family/village context to the international setting. Obviously, the first solution was mostly adopted in

the presentation of inter-state exchange to the inner public, and the second was employed in diplomatic practice.

If an 'evolutionary' process is envisaged, then the reciprocity pattern would be considered 'older' in so far as it is related to small groups in a pre-state setting. But in the Late Bronze age both interpretive patterns had already been a part of the common experience since time immemorial, so that their hypothetical prehistory is irrelevant here. And, as it happens, at a purely ideological level of classification, the redistributive pattern is endowed with a more archaic character. The redistributive pattern is more 'archaic' because it sees the displacements of goods as directed towards a unique and elevated centre. The peripheral countries find the only justification for their existence in providing the inner country with material goods. On the other hand, the reciprocal pattern looks more consistent with a process of evolution in so far as it reflects consciousness of a multicentred political world, the members of which each absorb surplus themselves. The application of the reciprocal pattern to the inner audience and the redistributive one to the outer audience goes along with a difference in cultural level.¹ The inner public has a more simple and conservative worldview; it is hardly aware of the existence let alone the character of the outer countries. By contrast, the palace circles, which engage in diplomatic negotiations and commercial activities, know that similar palaces exist elsewhere and that they must be treated as equals if working contacts with them are to be preserved.

Moreover, the main political formations developed and used the redistributive pattern during their formative phases, being much more concerned with inner consensus than with diplomatic negotiations. They consequently developed ideologies of inter-state interaction that are basically redistributive in nature – to be challenged by reciprocity models only during the Middle and especially Late Bronze periods, following a more intensive rate of inter-state contacts. In early Mesopotamian literary texts the archaic, redistributive pattern is often used in describing the movement of goods from the entire world to the central capital. Two examples may be quoted. First, in the 'Curse of Akkad' the prosperity of Naram-Sin's capital is the result of contributions from the four quarters of the world: Sumer in the south, Amurru in the west, Meluhha in the east and Subartu in the north. All bring in their products which fill the granaries and the storehouses of the 'central place', Akkad.² Secondly, when relating the construction of the Ningirsu temple, Gudea describes the transport of timber and stone from the various mountains on the periphery of Mesopotamia. The literary motif that he uses is eventually developed in the school texts into long lists of mountains specializing in

the supply of different types of wood or stone and even named after their characteristic products.³ The whole world contributes to the construction of the temple at its centre, and once built, the temple will perfectly express the universal control of its god (and its city-ruler) over all lands. The cosmic landscape is patterned accordingly: at the centre of a cultivated and inhabited plain, a city lies where the temple is built; all around the plain, the mountains are rich in raw materials, and from mountains to plain the rivers provide the necessary channels for transporting them. The heroic enterprise of the city-ruler consists in opening the roads to the mountains, gathering the raw materials, and bringing them to the centre. In this 'mental map', the world is shaped as a funnel in order to ensure the centralization of resources. Exchanges between different points within the periphery itself are physically impossible and ideologically irrelevant, and a flow of material goods 'against the current', from the centre to the periphery, would be contrary to the funnel-like shape. (Immaterial goods of a purely ideological nature are not, of course, subject to physical laws.)

During the Late Bronze period, the centralization of goods from the entire world is well represented. A Hittite ritual for temple building is reminiscent of the same principles already pointed out in the Gudea texts:

See! This temple which we have built for you, the god (he mentions the name of the god for whom they built it) – it is not we who have built it, all the gods have built it. The craftsmen gods have built it. Telipinu has laid the foundations. The walls above them, Ea, the king of wisdom, has built (them). Timber and stones, all the mountains have brought (them). The mortar, the goddesses have brought (it). They have laid foundations of silver and gold: the gold they brought from Birunduma, the silver they brought from Kuzza. The lapis they brought from Mount Takniyara. The marble they brought from Kanisha. The jasper they brought from Elam. The diorite they brought from the earth. The black iron of heaven they brought from heaven. Copper (and) bronze they brought from Mount Taggata in Alashiya.⁴

The list of quarrying countries used by Ramesses II is quite similar in its implications, even if different in literary arrangement. Twenty-seven foreign mountains/lands are listed, each one providing its characteristic product, according to the following scheme: 'Formula to be said by the mountain of malachite (= Sinai) to the son of Ra, Ramesses: I came bringing malachite in millions, in endless amounts, in hundreds of thousands.'⁵ The same is stated for the other countries and their metals or

stones: copper from Asy and Alashiya, lapis from Hatti, silver from Sangara (Babylonia) and so on.

At another level and in a different context, the same basic idea is to be found in a passage of the Ramesside scribal miscellanies:

Apply yourself with extreme zeal, firmness and efficiency to have things ready before (the arrival of) Pharaoh, your good lord, to wit: (a long list follows, including:) sweet moringa-oil, *dft*-oil of Alasia, the finest *qdw*-oil of Hatti, *imb*-oil of Alasia, *nkft*-oil of Sangar, *kmi*-oil of Amurru, *gt*-oil of Tahsy, and moringa-oil of Naharina ...⁶

The context here is an administrative model letter that is so determined to make a display of scribal learning in technical terminology that it results in an endless list of items. The scribe's anxiety to achieve terminological control of reality is superimposed on, and perfectly consistent with, the Egyptian concern for economic control of the world.

But the most typical Egyptian formulation of the redistributive pattern may be found in the celebrative inscriptions. The use of this pattern is so common that just one example – a text of Amenophis III, where the scheme is structured according to the four points of the compass – will be enough. The god Amun is speaking to the king:

When I turn my face to the south, I work a wonder for thee: I cause the chiefs of Kush, the wretched, to turn to thee, bearing all their tribute upon their backs.

When I turn my face to the north, I work a wonder for thee: I cause the countries of the ends of Asia to come to thee, bearing all their tribute upon their backs ...

When I turn my face to the west, I work a wonder for thee: I cause thee to seize Tehenu, (so that) there is no remnant of them ...

When I turn my face to the east, I work a wonder for thee: I cause to come to thee the countries of Punt, bearing all the pleasant sweet woods of their countries to crave peace with them and breath of thy giving.⁷

Every characteristic feature of the pattern is represented here: the fourfold division expressing totality; the centralization of raw materials and of the workforce; the subsuming into the same point of view of taxation, occasional exchange and plunder; and the purely ideological reward of 'life' (see Chapter 26).

Such texts aim at placing in the limelight the generalized and absolute power of the central king, who is able to draw in the contributions of the entire world. Royal titles paraphrase this basic idea, as in the epithets bestowed on Tukulti-Ninurta: the one 'receiving the heavy tribute of the four quarters in his city Ashur' or 'receiving the tribute of (all) the lands from the rising sun to the setting sun'.⁸

Thanks to this centralizing acquisition, the differentiated features of the foreign countries become functional in a cosmic perspective, emerging from the chaos where diversity means confusion. The foreign countries have different raw materials precisely in order to be able to supply the central country with the complete range of products fitting its complex range of needs. The centripetal polarization of the periphery gives to every point in it a precise role in a structured world – a role of subordination of course, in relation to the centre. Single foreign countries, with their 'monocultures', are not self-sufficient; they could not survive by themselves. How could a country survive producing only malachite, or incense, or cedarwood?⁹ The central country, obtaining and coordinating the whole range of products, is the only country entitled to live – eventually to redistribute 'life' to the periphery.

22

Intervention of the Reciprocal Pattern

The application of the redistributive pattern to international relations is more appropriate in the case of imperialistic states extending their influence toward the periphery and imposing unequal rates of exchange. In consequence, the pattern has a privileged position in texts originating in larger centralized states surrounded by minor partners, as with the early Mesopotamian states, Egypt and the Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid empires. However, when international relations are more balanced and the ideological perspectives of bordering states are similar, the reciprocal pattern becomes the basic instrument for inter-state contacts. In the formative period of the Middle Bronze the reciprocal pattern is fully operative in the Syro-Mesopotamian area,¹ and in the Late Bronze period throughout the entire Near East.²

The texts of the time are especially insistent that all international relationships follow a mirror-like pattern: what is valid in one direction must be accepted as equally valid in the other. We have already seen how this mental design is best translated into the literary pattern of symmetry in international treaties and related documents (Chapters 5 and 16). The same holds true for the exchange of material goods, planned according to symmetrical statements: 'Whatever you desire in my land, write to me and they will bring to you; and whatever I desire in your land, I will write to you and they will bring to me.'³ The climax is a general placing of one's own resources at the partner's disposal: 'This land is the land of my brother, and this house is the house of my brother.'⁴

Most of the general statements about reciprocity are found in documents pertaining to the most critical moment in a partnership, namely its beginning; later on, the exchanges will continue along the same lines. The beginning of a completely new partnership is rarely recorded, but it is attested in the first letters written by Ashur-uballit to

Amenophis IV.⁵ The inheritance of a partnership by a newly enthroned king is better documented in the Amarna corpus; this is on the occasion of the enthronement of Amenophis IV.⁶ Here we see that the traditional friendship enjoyed by the former king must be confirmed – at least at the same level of intensity, and preferably at a higher one:

Since my fathers and your fathers established good relations between them, they sent each other fine gifts and they never refused each other any request for fine things. Now my brother sent me as a gift (only) two minas of gold. If gold is abundant, send me as much as your father; if it is scarce, send me a half of what your father (used to send).⁷

The procedure for confirming the partnership seems rather fixed. 'It is the norm that when kings assume kingship, the kings their peer send them appropriate gifts: a royal garment and pure oil for the anointment.'⁸ Nevertheless, in return for their special gifts to the new king, his inherited partners expect him to reciprocate with more substantial gifts in order to show that he is willing to continue the exchange. No sound relationship can exist if not reinforced by an adequate two-way traffic of material goods: 'Between kings there is brotherhood, friendship, peace and good terms, (if) there is plenty of (precious) stones, plenty of silver, plenty of gold.'⁹

Now, on the one hand the phraseology is quite noble, speaking of 'love' and 'brotherhood', implying mutual fulfilment of desires and avoiding mention of anything that might cause offence to the partner.¹⁰ But on the other hand we immediately feel a certain impatience and disappointment at the excessive delays in the arrival of adequate deliveries. From the outset, the material interest is well to the fore, and the ostentatious concern for each other's prestige that is so evident in these messages risks being seen as nothing more than the formal embellishment of a commercial negotiation. In the Amarna corpus, dealing with relations between the reciprocity-oriented Asiatic kings and the centralizing Pharaoh, this unease is particularly evident. According to custom, the new partner, Amenophis IV, should act with special generosity towards the existing members in order to be accepted into the club, but this is hardly his natural inclination since in fact he cares for partnership much less than they do.

In contrast to the supplies delivered by a tributary king, which increase the prestige of the receiver, the supplies provided in a gift-exchange partnership should increase the prestige of the sender. And because of the practical, economic interest in receiving as much as possible and giving as

little as possible in return, this needs to be stressed: each party in the exchange has to pretend to be more concerned with the prestige of the other than with his own. A great king – each suggests to his counterpart – has to be generous, otherwise his prestige will plummet. Tushratta describes the reaction of his palace officials in discovering that the Egyptian shipment contained no gold: “They mourned very much: “Are all their things (just) these!? There is no gold!” They said: “In Egypt gold is more abundant than dust, and your brother loves you very much. What kind of man is he, who loves but does not send anything but this stuff!?”¹¹ The same problem is met by the prefect of Qadesh: “I said to my brothers: “A great king took me (in partnership) and favored me”. Let my lord not shame me in the presence of my brothers. What my lord has to give to his servant, let he (really) give!”¹²

A different procedure, rather distorted if compared to the rules of reciprocity, is to minimize the value of the partner’s supplies because of the abundant sources from which they are drawn. The usual boast of wealth in one’s own country is turned around when applied to that of the partner: you say that gold in Egypt is as common as dust, so it is nothing for you to collect it and send it in large quantities. Thus the low value of gold, reflecting its abundance, is such that only large shipments are worthy of a great king. Again, the argument from prestige is turned on the partner: if you are a great king, if your country is wealthy, if gold is really as abundant as you pretend, you are bound to act accordingly.

When a new partner emerges in the limited space of the international gift-exchange, the existing members feel threatened and try to discredit him. Ashur-uballit, according to the Kassite king, is too openly interested in the material aspects of the partnership, and does not conceive of it as a prestige game. He acts like a merchant rather than a king: “I did not send to you the Assyrians, servants of mine: why did they travel to your country by their own decision? If you care for me, they must not do any buying there, send them away empty-handed!”¹³ The attempt to cut the Assyrians down to size is evident, yet the kind of argument used has some foundation. In the Amarna corpus, the Assyrian letters are paralleled only by the Alashiya letters in their concern for the utilitarian aspects of partnership. The Assyrian king protests: “(What you sent me) is not even enough to cover my messengers’ expenses for their trips to and fro!”¹⁴ And the Alashiya king explicitly pretends to be paid: “The people of my land protest because of the timber that the king of Egypt took from me: my brother, give me its price!”¹⁵ The trading activities of Assyria and Alashiya are intensive and long established, and they have a strong position as producers or intermediaries in basic raw materials (Cypriot copper,

Iranian tin). As a result of this, the Assyrian and Cypriot letters are much more focused on commercial and practical questions (the speed of journeys, for example) than on gift ideology and brotherhood relationships.

However, a merely commercial judgement on goods supplied would be insufficient for the purpose of the political relationships concerned. These are political in so far as they contain some degree of moral evaluation, some amount of disagreement, and a continuity in time that only the perennial quest for balance through contacts which – in the short run – may be unbalanced can provide. The model of pure barter certainly exists, and in the Late Bronze it is a well attested procedure when two individuals want to settle accounts:

I melted the copper. I melted it for the asses of Agalilu's son. So I melted it. You have to supply the asses, and I will supply the copper. Let Ba'alalu come, let him swear about the price of the asses and let him take the copper.¹⁶

What draughtsman Neferhotpe gave to Haremwia: one wooden stela of Nofreteroy; while he gave to me one chest in exchange for it. Further: I decorated two coffins for him on the river bank and he made one bed for me.¹⁷

This model, however, cannot serve the purposes of political interaction: there is no prestige in giving or in receiving, and no struggle for prestige takes place. The gift-exchange model is much more suitable because it enshrines the contradiction between the real and the moral worlds. The real concern is for one's own interest, but the rule is to be anxious for the partner's interest. The real concern is to obtain goods but the rule is to give them. This contradiction generates an endless process of bargaining in the guise of a competition in generosity. The negotiations continue for the entire life span of the partners and are even inherited by their sons; under the opposing pressures of hostility and friendship, they are always teetering between being concluded and breaking up. The economic value of the gifts was probably 'not even worth the trip', as Ashur-uballit immediately realized, and the messengers who had brought them were detained for years just to prove who was more powerful or less interested. But the political relevance of these apparently useless negotiations is considerable. By preserving contact between the great kings, they allowed for a continuous yet moderate discharge of aggression to take place, a 'sublimation' of potential military encounters.

Gift exchanges which are unbalanced in the short term and thus generate the need for continuing contact are much better suited to the preservation of political relationships than barter exchanges, which are perfectly balanced by definition. Of course, exchanges of gifts that are unequal in value are also better than refusals to exchange at all:

Your messengers came three times without you let them bring any good gift. Therefore I do not let (my messenger) to bring any good gift for you. As there is nothing precious for me, so there is nothing precious for you.¹⁸

This looks like childish spite and is simply an additional attempt to get 'more', to be followed by other letters with more charges and recriminations – but also hopefully by other gifts. If this sort of 'homeopathic treatment' of war were interrupted, it would have been a serious matter: it would have meant real war.

23

Accumulation vs. Circulation

The redistribution and reciprocity patterns dictate different, even opposite, models of behaviour. In that of the first, imports are celebrated but exports are not even considered: the influx of goods from the periphery is an index of power (see Chapter 21) and a prerequisite for the exemplary functioning of the state. In Egypt especially, important literary compositions like the sixth stanza of the ‘Thousand Songs in Honor of Amun’¹ and significant administrative devices such as the endless lists of incoming items in the Harris Papyrus² testify to such a syndrome. Two examples from normal texts are sufficient to illustrate this:

All the lands and all the foreign countries are coming with their gifts, with their sons, with their horses, silver and copper in large amounts, pure ivory, without knowing the roads near their countries.³

Great is your power, o good god ... these supplies are larger than those of all lands: never has such a thing been seen since the time of the forefathers, the kings who came before. It happened for you, our lord!⁴

In parallel to the emphasis on incoming goods, the complete silence on the question of outgoing goods is also meaningful. No ‘exports’ – apart from the purely ideological one of ‘life’ (see Chapter 25) – are mentioned at all. Since consumption is also ignored, the resulting process is simply one of accumulation. Each incoming good is added to the pile, preserved and displayed. This symbolizes prosperity and power, and ensures a happy future. Texts and iconic representations agree perfectly in the utopian picture that they depict:

Its workshops were filled with slaves of the sons of the rulers of foreign countries, plunder of His Majesty. Its storehouses were filled with

goods, whose number is impossible to know ... Its herds were like the sand on the sea-shore, numbering to millions ... Their silver, their gold, their herds, and the precious stones of their lands were millions, hundreds of thousands, tens of thousands.⁵

If we want to summarize in just one epithet the ideal model of the sovereign, 'He is a king who takes, but from whom no one takes.'⁶ For his part, the model state administrator must heed no other advice than this: 'Increase your contribution every year!'⁷

The ideal of reciprocity is completely different. It is not even an ideal of balance (this being the average reality); instead, it demands generosity in giving while encouraging no interest at all in receiving. The only moral act is that of giving; receiving will follow automatically, whether we care about it or not. In the diplomatic correspondence, the optimal behaviour is that indicated by the king of Alashiya or promised by the king of Mitanni: 'Do not compare (me) with the king of Hatti or with the king of Babylon! As for me, whatever gift you sent to me, I reciprocated it to you twice'⁸; 'Whatever my brother desires for his house, let him write and take! As for me, I will give ten times what my brother desires.'⁹

In the competition for prestige, rivals as well as partners must be outstripped in generosity: 'The dowry of my daughter is greater than that of the daughter of the king of Karduniash or the king of Zulabi.'¹⁰ Those who do not follow the rules are subject to moral and social reprimand: 'Really does my brother not possess anything at all? If the son of the Sun-god, or the son of the Storm-god had nothing, or if the Sea had nothing, you too could have nothing. But, my brother, do you want to get rich at my expense? That is neither renown nor lordly behavior!'¹¹

In the evaluation of generosity, the relative wealth of the partners has to be taken into account. Peers have to compete at an equal level, but if the king takes part in a ceremonial circuit with his subjects, he cannot confine himself merely to matching their gifts to him. A Hittite ritual establishes that the king has to reciprocate ten times the value of the annual offerings made by his officials!¹² The extreme application of the model of generosity – a gesture of pure generosity – comes in the form of an offering made without any expectation that it will be requited, and even after a refusal has already been received. This is of course simply a rhetorical argument and a bargaining technique: 'My brother, why did you not send me a woman? Now, since you did not send me a woman, should I likewise refuse a woman to you? No! I have daughters and I shall not refuse them to you.'¹³

It is also easy to find formulations of reciprocity as generosity in non-official texts, which are more indicative of customs and values. We find,

for instance, the funerary praise of the man 'who gave in millions and reckoned in thousands'¹⁴, and the reproach of egoism – 'you are particularly wealthy, yet you do not give anything to anybody'.¹⁵ Consider also the following statements on the prospect of an increased return: 'what is given small, comes back augmented'; 'double the food your mother gave you'; 'you bring in two, you get out three'.¹⁶

In the reciprocity perspective, then, wealth may be received in return for generosity but must not be deliberately sought. The accumulation of goods is frowned upon, and in Babylonian wisdom literature is believed to invite a tragic end: 'The well-heeled parvenu who treasured up possessions, the king will put him to the flames before his time.'¹⁷ Egotistical accumulation is also openly condemned in the Hittite admonitory examples: 'In the Arzawa land there was a Nunnu of Hurma. He did not give silver and gold, and everything he got he kept for himself in his house.'¹⁸ No wonder that later on in the story Nunnu is killed, thus getting his just deserts for such anti-social behaviour.

It is readily evident that the socio-political setting of the two models of behaviour is different. The ideal of accumulation is mainly attested at the official level, that of generosity at the level of personal conduct. This means that the state (the royal palace, the temple) is in charge of accumulation, and its prosperity and effectiveness depend on its capacity to store wealth for the future. The individual members of the community, however, must be generous and show no interest in acquisition. The overall model is that of a continuous and balanced circulation at the bottom of the socio-political pyramid, with accumulation taking place at the top. The concentration of surplus is a state monopoly; the single cells of the community have to keep a reciprocal balance through exchange of goods and mutual aid.

The two procedures, so different, are both solutions to the same problem: the scarcity of goods, the threat of famine. In a stratified society as a whole, the solution is the central storage of reserve supplies: the greater their extent, the more they provide a feeling of security. The communal granary will be opened in case of need and will provide food for everybody. But at the level of individuals and families, the solution is recourse to mutual aid among kinsmen and neighbours: sharing supplies when their possession is enjoyed guarantees receiving them when it is not.¹⁹ Accumulation and generosity are therefore set in two different social contexts, and there is no real contradiction between the positive and the negative evaluation of accumulation in them.

Besides the socio-political framework, a literary analysis also confirms the complementary features of the two models, neither of them belonging

to a realistic description of the present in narrative texts. The official texts describing the abundance of the central stores are clearly utopian, although they pretend that the ideal model has been realized by the reigning king. The paradise-like pictures of royal accumulation attempt to reassure the people that the reigning ruler is actually able to achieve a situation of unlimited supply in the here and now – so different from the common experience. On the other hand, the ‘wisdom’ advice on circulation and generosity is also utopian, not by way of triumphalism and extravagant promise but by reproaches, instructions and stipulated norms. The gap between image and reality is filled in the one case by optimism that the ideal picture will be achieved in the near future, in the other by regret that it was not (or not always) fulfilled in the recent past.

Accumulation and exchange, although themselves contrasted, are together contrasted with consumption – a concept which, unlike in modern market ideologies, is never idealized in the ancient Near East. A model of unlimited consumption could be proposed only in societies endowed with super-abundant goods, while societies characterized by endemic scarcity try to hide the (unavoidable) moment of use and consumption. The models of abnormal accumulation and unending circulation are designed to exorcise the evil prospects of shortage and famine. The only wastage that such a society is able to idealize as positive and necessary is that entailed in cult offerings. But these are not really ‘wasted’ assets but ‘productive investments’; as such, they are in line with the anticipated increase in return on goods distributed which is typical of interpersonal circulation. And the expected return is proportional to the immense difference in rank and power that separates humans and gods. In return for our offerings of food or first fruits, the gods, from their elevated positions, must reciprocate in multiples of ten, a hundred or a thousand.

24

Self-sufficiency vs. Interdependence

In its extreme form, the redistributive model is a model of autarchy: everything necessary is to be found inside the *oikos*, be it the household or the state. If nevertheless certain products have to be obtained from the outside, two means are employed by the central state to overcome the ideological difficulty that this produces. First, the foreign goods are dismissed as coarse 'raw materials' that have no significance until processed and utilized by the only civilized country. Secondly, acquisition of the foreign goods is cited as evidence of central control of the entire world; thus self-sufficiency is extended rather than renounced.

As for the practice of exchanging goods, this contrasts with the autarchy model so sharply as to be noticed by the parties concerned, especially when the strength of the desire for interaction and pride in self-sufficiency vary between them. To the Egyptian king, who presumably claimed to need nothing, the Babylonian king replies:

As I am told that in my brother's country there is everything and my brother is in need of nothing, so also in my country there is everything and I too am in need of nothing. But it is a good thing received from olden times, from the previous kings, to send gifts to each other. Let this habit remain established between us!¹

It may be observed that Egypt, having at its disposal not only its own resources but also the exotic products of Nubia and Syria-Palestine, really was self-sufficient. As a result, Pharaoh has little interest in exchange with the Asiatic kings, and negotiates with an evident lack of interest and even annoyance. By contrast, the Asiatic kings are dependent on Egypt for gold, as well as for ivory, ebony, incense and all of the other products of Africa. In consequence, they reveal a much greater interest in the exchange

system, the tone of their requests simultaneously suggesting pressure and self-abasement.

Yet the case of women, which is unconnected with any difference in ecology or merchandise, demonstrates that the Egyptian position is based on ideology more than economy – or that traditional self-sufficiency in material goods produced an ideological perspective which extended to items uninfluenced by scarcity or restricted access. The Egyptian position is summarized in the statement: 'Since olden times a daughter of the king of Egypt has never been given to anybody.'² The Asiatic reply is that, every country being self-sufficient in women, Pharaoh's statement signifies a refusal to acknowledge parity in rank, a full brotherhood:

The daughter of Babylonia or the daughter of Amurru whom I, the queen, took (as daughter-in-law), were they not indeed a source of praise for me before the people of Hatti? It was I who did it: I took as daughter-in-law the foreign daughter of a great king. And if at some time his messengers come to my daughter-in-law, or if one of her brothers or sisters comes to her, is this not also a source of praise for me? Had I no girl from the Hatti land? Did I not do this for the sake of renown? Does perhaps my brother have no woman? But my brother did not do that because of my position in brotherhood. But even if you do it, it just corresponds to (the conduct of) the king of Karduniash: did he not take a daughter of the great king, the king of Hatti, the mighty king, for marriage? And if you should say 'The king of Karduniash is not a great king', then my brother does not know the country of Karduniash, what rank it is.³

It is clear that exchanges are a function of political contacts rather than vice versa: they have a mainly social value in the enlarged international society of the time, as well as within the country of each partner member. The queen of Hatti can quote her Babylonian daughter-in-law admiringly both to the domestic audience and foreign partner alike.

Negotiations are basically centred on problems of rank and prestige, but prestige within one's own country seems to be more important than prestige relative to the outside partner. In order to obtain valuable goods from foreign countries, the Asiatic kings have to ask or even beg for them. Clearly admitting to be in need, they have to deviate in a rather humiliating way from the model of self-sufficiency.⁴

The only way to ask for something without losing prestige is to suggest that its need is exceptional. In this way a general self-sufficiency may still be plausibly proclaimed. Thus Ashur-uballit asks for gold only because he

is building a new palace; Tushratta needs gold for the funerary monument of his grandfather; Kadashman-Enlil and Burna-Buriash ask for gold because they have started work on a new building. The pretexts are always the same during the entire timespan covered by the Amarna archive; they are even passed down from father to son, and are nothing more than a formality. According to this fiction, gold is required in large amounts, but either immediately or not at all. This is because prestige requires that it be a function of a precise undertaking and not of a general desire for wealth. The formal refusal to accept gold delivered too late to be used in the undertaking for which it was requested is quite unbelievable in practical terms:

If within this summer, in the months of Tammuz or Ab, you will send me the gold about which I wrote to you, then I will give you my daughter. Therefore send gold according to your will. But if you will not send me the gold (in time) to allow me to finish the work that I undertook, why should you send it to me (later on)? When the work I undertook will be finished, what could I do with the gold? Even if you will send me 3,000 talents, I will not accept them, I will send them back, and I will not give you my daughter.⁵

We suspect that such humiliating negotiations could be reformulated in the building inscriptions celebrating the completion of the new palace as a demonstration of the king's power in obtaining precious materials from distant lands, to the astonished admiration of his domestic audience.

Basically, normal subsistence depends on inner resources, while the items of prestige are the most frequently exchanged objects. All the paraphernalia employed as status symbols (chariots and horses, weapons, garments, jewels, etc.) were circulating widely among the palace elites of the Late Bronze period. The appreciation of an object 'according to the style of country X' or as 'workmanship of country Y' is widespread.⁶ To possess such an object demonstrates membership of the upper class and contacts with distant partners. It is thus a status symbol that is of use both at home and abroad. The increase in prestige that it will bring in the brotherhood of kings is such that a foreign object of special value may be re-used as a gift to another partner, its provenance increasing its value:

As to the gift of the king of Ahhiyawa about which you wrote to me, I do not know whether the messenger brought to you something or not. But I took a ceremonial vessel of silver and one of refined gold from Egypt, and I sent to you. Now send me what you consider adequate.⁷

Raw materials, however highly prized, remain 'peripheral' products which thus fit perfectly into the centralized pattern. However, the taste for products of refined foreign craftsmanship and the appreciation of foreign competence in special fields of activity brings about a multicentred view of the cultural world. Some foreign countries, some distant royal palaces, can be as good as our own, even better for particular items. The circulation of objects is complemented by a circulation of artisans and specialized personnel, since certain kinds of knowledge cannot circulate in their end products but must be applied 'on the spot'. Physicians and conjurors of Egyptian and Babylonian origin are widely appreciated;⁸ sculptors and scribes are also transferred from palace to palace.⁹ The supplying palace gains in prestige but (more often than not) loses the specialist forever, 'lent' to a distant colleague but never returned.

Sometimes even the best specialist in the world is not enough. When the aged sister of Hattushili becomes pregnant, the only hope for a successful delivery is thought to be some famous physician in Egypt. But the answer is discouraging:

What my brother wrote to me about his sister Matanazi: 'Let my brother send a man to prepare draughts for her, to allow her to give birth' – so my brother wrote to me. But I reply to my brother: look, Matanazi, my brother's sister, the king your brother (= I) knows her: she is in the age of 50 or in the age of 60. Look: a woman who completed 50 years or who completed 60 years, they cannot prepare any draught for her, to allow her to give birth. Now, may Shamash and Adad order that the work they did to my brother's sister be accomplished! (In this case) I, the king your brother, will send an expert conjuror and an expert physician, and they will prepare for her the draught for her delivery.¹⁰

When human science is at a loss, the obvious recourse is to the gods. And in case our gods seem to be at a loss too, a 'circulation' of foreign gods may be imagined and to some extent practised. Just as foreign gods can be 'called up' before battle to make them abandon their country and render our victory easier, just as foreign gods can be deported from conquered cities (see Chapter 15), so foreign gods can also be 'lent' in case of need. An increase in prestige both for the providing country and the travelling god is assured. Ideological perplexities may be overcome, for instance by imagining that the god himself appeared in a dream and manifested his will to move. But the danger is the same for specialized physicians and healing gods: the danger that a delayed restitution may become a

prolonged exile. In Egypt, gods are 'abundant like dust' – if we may imitate the image used of gold. So when it decides that it needs an Asiatic god, namely the famous healing goddess Ishtar of Nineveh, Tushratta has for the first and last time in his life the opportunity to negotiate from a position of strength. But a goddess is too valuable an item to be included in any simple bargain, and thus the only concern is to safeguard her ability to go and return as soon as possible:

Thus says Ishtar of Nineveh, lady of all lands: 'I will go to Egypt, a land I love, I will get there'. Behold, I am sending her, she comes ... Let my brother honor her, and in joy let she leave: may she come back! ... Ishtar for me is my goddess, for my brother she is not his goddess.¹¹

The uncertain distinction between a voluntary move and a forced exile can also be exploited the other way round. The forced deportation of a god (that is, of his cult statue) can be reinterpreted as an expression of his free will in journeying abroad, exercising his power wherever he goes. It is in this way that Nebuchadnezzar views the successive captures of Marduk's statue in Hatti (following Murshili's conquest of Babylon, ca. 1595 BC), in Assyria (following Tukulti-Ninurta's conquest, ca. 1210 BC) and in Elam (following Kudur-Nahhunte's conquest, ca. 1160 BC): 'I am one who goes through the mountains, who moves over the countries, who goes all over the lands from sunrise to sunset. I said: "I will go to the Hatti land".'¹² When abroad, the Babylonian god is effective in channelling foreign goods to his home country, and when he decides to go back he does so. Such a theological interpretation of the vagaries of the cultic statues would hardly have been possible without the background of healing statues lent by one king to the other in order to exercise their beneficial power all over the world.

25

The Ideology of Life

The pattern of centralization requires an explanation for the conduct of the periphery. Why do the outer countries surrender their goods without mention of any return? No mystery surrounds the determination of the central state to obtain more wealth and establish its power but why does the periphery submit to it?

Egyptian ideology does not ignore this problem. Obviously the reasons proclaimed in the celebrative texts do not make the relationship between centre and periphery more balanced; on the contrary, they provide additional prestige to the former. The reasons are rather stereotyped, and concern the pivotal concept of 'life'; yet they are applied to different political and military situations in different ways. When the transfer of goods takes place following a battlefield victory or expedition bent on plunder, the outer country receives no return, not even at the ideological level. In fact, since it has refused to enter into any relationship with Egypt and offered nothing but war, its people – a purely passive element – are either killed or despoiled. The stelae of Amenophis II, for instance, insert after every victory of the Pharaoh a 'list of the booty' taken, and the same pattern is followed in the Annals of Tuthmosis III.¹

In other cases the enemy, on the point of being defeated, decides to surrender and give up his goods in order to avoid being killed:

Do not overwhelm us! Lo, your might is great, your strength is heavy upon the land of Hatti. Is it good that you slay your servants, your face savage toward them and without pity? Be not hard in your dealing, victorious king! Peace is better than fighting. Give us breath!²

Pharaoh should reasonably accept the offered submission, since a live servant is more useful than a dead one; not only will he deliver his goods

now, but he will keep working and producing more of them, and these will be supplied forever.

As for the enemies of Egypt who are not at the moment touched by the military activity of Pharaoh and whose lives are not in immediate danger, they decide nevertheless to surrender their goods out of fear of suffering the same fate as other peoples. In supplying their goods, they ask for 'life' in return:

After the princes of Naharina, of Hatti, and of Sangara heard of the great victory which I had effected, each one equalled his fellow with all (kinds of) presents from all the foreign countries, while speaking from their hearts in order to request peace with his majesty and in return for giving them the breath of life.³

Lastly, there are foreign peoples who by their geographical position have nothing to fear from Egyptian military action. Nevertheless, they too hear of the 'fame' of Pharaoh and similarly deliver their presents in exchange for 'life':

Coming in peace by the princes of the Keftiu and the islands in the midst of the Great Green, bowed down with head bowed, because of the fame of his majesty ... for they heard of his victories in all the foreign countries. Their goods were on their backs, in return for giving them the breath of life.⁴

Along this continuum of situations, the return obtained by the outer country for the supply of goods becomes more and more valuable. At one end it is purely negative: just avoiding death, surviving the killing activity of the Egyptian troops. But when the relationship is more balanced, or the physical threat less immediate, the reward of 'life' acquires a positive value; in this situation it looks like a real return. And since the prospect of a worldwide extension of Egyptian power is always present in the celebrative texts, every delivery of goods (whether real tribute, trade or exchange of gifts – see Chapters 26–8) is always viewed as an attempt to get the invaluable reciprocal gift of 'life'. The Egyptian texts are consistent, even monotonous, on this point, and just one example will be enough:

Every land comes to him bowed down, their princes loaded with their deliveries ... the princes of Mitanni come to him, their supplies on their backs, in order to request peace with his majesty and in return for his sweet breath of life.⁵

This 'life', physically symbolized by the 'breath of life' (*t'w n 'nh*),⁶ has various aspects. The first, properly political, implication is that life means the possibility of keeping a royal position. Though not true for an independent king, for a 'subject' one this amounts to a credible threat: if he does not keep delivering his tribute, he will not be allowed to reign. Nevertheless, the ideology and celebrative inscriptions of Egypt, where the power of Pharaoh is seen as worldwide, make no distinction between 'subject' and 'independent' kings. Every king has to surrender his goods if he wants to keep his political position.

Notice that in Asiatic political terminology this meaning of the verb 'to live' (Akkadian *balātu*)⁷ is common, as it is the opposite of politically 'killing' a king simply by removing him from the throne: 'Mashhuiluwa's brothers killed him and drove him out of the land. He came to my father's presence, and my father did not reject him'; 'Muwatalli, my brother, killed Benteshina, king of Amurru ... he removed Benteshina from the kingship over Amurru, and led him captive to the Hatti land'; 'If you, my lord, will give me life and the gods will stand by me, let the great king, king of Hatti, not remove king Artatama from his royal throne, but may I be installed as his successor and (eventually) rule the land of Mitanni.'⁸ Asiatic use is more technical, being applied only to dependent kings who are removed or promoted by their suzerain. Moreover no precise connection is to be found with the supply of goods. To interpret the Egyptian *s'nh*⁹ as the equivalent of Akkadian *bullutu* is only partly correct, the Egyptian ideological background being rather different and more complex.

A second implication of the 'life' ideology, namely its theological implication, is peculiar to Egypt. Pharaoh can let people 'live' in the sense of granting them survival after death. This is a privilege belonging originally only to Pharaoh, but later extended by him to wider and wider circles of relatives, friends, palace officials and lastly commoners, without the memory of its pharaonic origin and connection ever being lost. This theological aspect is the most deeply rooted in the Egyptian mentality, but it is also the least easily transferred to foreign peoples; after all, they have their own perspectives on survival after death.

A third aspect is more strictly linked to the circulation of goods: 'life' as physical survival in the face of famine and starvation. Life becomes 'food', or 'living' – if we want to keep the etymological connection (as with the Egyptian *'nh* 'life' and *'nh.w* 'living').¹⁰ Pharaoh is the dispenser of life in that he ensures the productivity of the land and the overall functioning of the economic organization of the state. More particularly, he is the dispenser of life in that he gives food to his dependents, being the head of the agency of redistribution.

The three aspects – political, theological and economic – of the ideology of life are perfectly integrated and constitute a continuum that is broken up here only for the sake of analysis. This continuum is the best expression of the redistributive pattern. Pharaoh – at the centre of the system – justifies his activity as surplus collector by reference to his role as dispenser of life to his subjects.

But subjects inhabiting two different zones should be distinguished, with different roles and different access to goods and services. First there are the inner subjects, who receive sustenance and prestigious items in return for their civil or military work. Secondly, there are the outer subjects, who have to bestow all of their raw materials and labour on the centre but receive hardly any reward for them at all. There are no 'exports', no outward 'distribution' takes place. The only 'export' that Egyptian ideology considers dignified, and thus worthy of being acknowledged and boasted about, is the export of life, politically and materially conceived. With a strong paternalistic tone, Merneptah sings his own praises for sending food to the needy Hittites: 'the Asiatics to whom I let grain to be shipped on boats, in order to keep the Hatti land alive.'¹¹ The current interpretations of this passage as an expression of 'philanthropy' or as a 'political move' imply that the grain was sent free of charge. Of course, this is what the boast seeks to convey, but it is not necessarily what really happened. The Hittites were short of grain but not of silver, and the Egyptian shipment is part of a large-scale operation that is also taking place in northern Syria.¹² Be that as it may, what is really significant about this is that the only commercial activity in which there is boasting about exports while imports are concealed (the reverse of the usual view of goods exchange) is that connected with the concept of 'life'.

At times, instead of exporting food to the needy periphery, its starving people may be admitted to the inner country so that they may profit from its abundance in food and drink. We have already observed (Chapter 9) the paternalistic attitude expressed in the journal of the Egyptian border official who allows Asiatic herds to enter the eastern Delta in search of water.¹³ The Joseph stories are a faithful echo of this view of Egypt as a land of plenty, in contrast to the Asiatic lands that have little water, low agricultural yields, and miserable pastures. Of course according to the rules of hospitality,¹⁴ gifts must be given and accepted, but never taken without being offered! If the Asiatic tribes try to force their way into the Delta, even if they are pressed by famine, they are to be exterminated.

The Asiatic peoples largely ignored the implications of Egypt's ideology. The distant 'great kings' were hardly aware of the Egyptian celebrative statements, while the pastoral tribes immediately adjacent to the Delta

had no political structure capable of absorbing this kind of propaganda. However, the situation is different with the Syro-Palestinian kings, who periodically receive letters urging them to obey, to submit, to surrender their goods and labour for a 'life' considered to be a monopoly of Pharaoh: 'Submit to the king your lord: and you shall live!'; 'Come here yourself, or send your son: and you shall see the king, at whose sight all the lands live!'¹⁵ Normally they repeat the ideological statements for what they are, in stereotyped phrases like 'You let live, you let die'.¹⁶ This is done the more cursorily since the economic balance is in any case ensured through other procedures, the 'granting of life' being an additional, properly political item.

But in the event of serious distress, the Syro-Palestinian kings try to obtain from Egypt a materialization of its ideology, a transformation of 'life' into 'living, food'. The term *balātu* in the Amarna letters generally conveys the meaning 'food', as is clear from the context and from its alternation with *še'u* 'grain'. These are the requests of Rib-Adda, king of Byblos: 'May the king listen to the words of his servant, and may he give life/living to his servant and let his servant live'; 'My fathers had garrison troops of the king with them and life/victuals of the king for them, while now I have neither victuals nor troops of the king for me'; etc.¹⁷ Quite similar are the requests made by Abi-Milki, king of Tyre: 'May the king take care of his servant and give him Uzu for his life/living'; 'May the king think to the servant of Maya-Ati in order to give water for keeping him alive. Since there is no wood, no water, no straw, no land for the dead, may the king take care of the servant of Maya-Ati, to give him life/living.'¹⁸

The famine that ravages Byblos under pressure from Amurru, or the loss of control over the interior territory (Uzu) by the king of Tyre, are real problems for which Egyptian help is sought within the framework of the often promised granting of life by Pharaoh to his faithful servants. This is not just a cunning attempt by the Syro-Palestinian kings to manipulate the propagandistic phraseology of the Egyptian palace to their own advantage. The problem is more serious than this. From the Egyptian point of view, the relationship is one-sided: it is based on the presupposition that conquest or fear of fame will be effective in convincing the Asiatic kings of the need to submit. As a result, real goods (tribute, service) move from Syria-Palestine to Egypt, and a purely ideological item ('life') is sent back in return – where 'life' means Pharaoh's consent that the local kinglets should continue to rule, it being taken for granted that no burden is foreseen for the Egyptian administration. In letters of Egyptian origin, the term *balātu* always has a purely

ideological meaning. But from the Syro-Palestinian point of view the political relationship is reciprocal: if the petty king is a faithful servant, he has to be protected (see Chapter 19), and if he is in need, he is entitled to be kept alive in the practical sense of being nourished. Within the framework of a large distributive entity, the Syro-Palestinian kings try to gain acceptance as inner servants, as officials of the central administration; they try to progress from the outer belt to the inner circuit of distribution. Their adoption of the title *ḥazānu* points in the same direction; the term denotes a local official, responsible to the central government for the affairs of a village or small town. In metaphorically labelling themselves as '*ḥazānu* of the Pharaoh', the petty kings renounce their autonomy for the advantage of being accepted as Egyptian 'mayors'.

But the Egyptian administration resisted all attempts of this kind, accepting neither the local kings as equivalents of the Egyptian 'mayors', nor their peoples as subjects of the inner country to be nourished in case of need.

26

Hatshepsut and Punt: Trade or Tribute?

Engraved on the walls of the second column-hall in her temple at Deir el-Bahri are reliefs and texts relating the expedition sent by Hatshepsut to Punt.¹ These are an excellent source for the study of the interaction of ideology with the practical running of the transactions that take place between countries of different technological level and political organization. This difference is emphasized by the particularly remote location of Punt,² the difficulty of access to it and the nature of its products. These are generally referred to as 'the marvels of Punt', an expression that indicates just how rare and exotic they are believed to be. The location of Punt is also described in rather vague terms, more cosmological than topographical in nature, and suggesting that it is to be found at the extreme edge of the world; the Egyptians had no direct geographical experience beyond Punt.

The products of Punt were already reaching Egypt before royal trade expeditions like that of Hatshepsut were undertaken; myrrh and incense³ in particular were necessary for the cult, and were consumed in large amounts. These products reached Egypt slowly and with great difficulty, by means of local caravans in East Africa and down the Nile,⁴ with many detours and the intervention of many middlemen. The situation is well described by Hatshepsut:

No one trod the myrrh terraces, which the people (*mnt* = the Egyptians) knew not; it was heard of from mouth to mouth, by hearsay of the ancestors. The marvels brought thence under the fathers, the kings of Lower Egypt, were brought from one to another, and since the time of the ancestors, the kings of Upper Egypt who were of old, as a return for many payments; none reaching them except the carriers.⁵

By establishing a direct route through the Red Sea and bypassing the middlemen, Hatshepsut obtains the desired products much more cheaply.⁶ But advantages of an ideological (besides the economic) nature are also obtained, since the presence of the Egyptian army in Punt effectively absorbs this land into the officially 'known' and controlled world. The Egyptians physically 'trod on the myrrh terraces', taking possession of a land that was until then irrelevant and almost non-existent because without benefit of a direct link to the centre of the world.

An exchange of goods between partners of very different cultural and technological background and economic and political organization, has no common medium of exchange or measure of value. Each partner puts a different value on his own products and those that he receives, and each is convinced that he has made an extraordinary profit. The economically advanced partner gets raw materials that are extremely valuable in his own country, in exchange for a few common items of his workmanship (cloth, jewellery, some weapons). And he will use the exotic products acquired for conspicuous consumption (in the cult, in this case), as well as for hoarding, redistribution or the financing of monumental buildings – all uses which increase his prestige inside his own country.⁷ In his turn, the economically backward partner is convinced that he has given away merely useless, naturally abundant materials in exchange for prestigious items that he will be alone in possessing in his small community, and that will in consequence reinforce his authority over the tribe. Each partner, by virtue of obtaining rare and exotic products, increases his prestige and authority at home, even if in different socio-economic contexts and on different scales of magnitude.

In Hatshepsut's column-hall, the reliefs of the south wall are particularly eloquent about the 'real' trade contacts, since they show the negotiation on the spot.⁸ The other reliefs on the west and north walls relate the trip back to Egypt, the operations of weighing, measuring, reckoning and the presentation of the 'marvels' to the gods and the inner Egyptian public. They are therefore more indicative of the propaganda purposes served by the enterprise. We could say that the south wall shows the trade contact as it took place, and the west and north walls show the trade contact as it was later narrated. But all the reliefs are in themselves a feature of the propagandistic recording of the expedition. The ideological interpretation is heavily present in all the reliefs, including those on the south wall.

However, in using the south wall as a principal source of information, the main points of relevance to an interpretation of the exchange and an evaluation of its ideological impact are as follows.

First, the Egyptians did bring goods to be delivered as gifts of their own, and did in fact deliver them. This is shown in the iconic representation,⁹ and is to be read in the accompanying texts: 'The arrival of the king's messenger in God's land, together with the army which is behind him, before the chiefs of Punt; dispatched with every good thing from the court, for Hathor mistress of Punt'; 'Pitching the tent of the king's messenger and his army, in the myrrh-terraces of Punt on the side of the sea, in order to receive the chiefs of this country. There are offered to them bread, beer, wine, meat, fruit, every thing found in Egypt, according to that which was commanded in the court.'¹⁰ What takes place is therefore an exchange of goods in both directions, whatever their economic value (the estimates of which were quite different, as already seen).

Secondly, notwithstanding the delivery of goods in exchange, the supplies from Punt are defined as *imw* and considered as tribute: 'Reception of the tribute of the chief of Punt, by the king's messenger'; 'The coming of the chief of Punt bearing tribute at the side of the sea, before the king's messenger.'¹¹ We shall see (Chapter 28) that the term employed has a 'neutral' meaning, but the figures and the texts clearly conceive these deliveries as an expression of submission. The chiefs of Punt 'are coming ... doing obeisance, with bowed head'.¹² The text even emphasizes how the chiefs of Punt move toward the Egyptian messenger, while the latter receives them standing still. And in this context, of course, movement signifies inferiority. In our case, the final situation (the natives going toward the Egyptians) is the reverse of the real course of the expedition: the Egyptians travelled a long distance to get to Punt, where they are received by the local chiefs. We shall see how the view of the exchange as tribute is developed in the following scenes, but the determination to present the negotiation as a 'submission scene' is already evident here.

Thirdly, the contradiction between the view that the goods from Punt are tribute and the delivery of gifts in exchange for them is solved by two devices, both preserving the Egyptian ideology intact. The first consists of making a goddess and not the local chief the recipient of the gifts. The goddess has the name and personality of the Egyptian Hathor – an artificial convention applied to all countries supplying raw materials.¹³ By this means it transpires that the gifts brought by the Egyptians have not really left the Egyptian orbit: they are offered to an Egyptian goddess who, because of her vastly irradiating power, can control even these faraway lands.

The second device consists of describing the gifts as foodstuffs. This kind of gift (the only 'export' consistent with Egyptian ideology – see

Chapter 25) has a positive value for the giver, because the recipient owes him his survival. Notice that the picture shows gifts other than food: weapons, necklaces, etc.¹⁴ Of course the local chiefs considered the non-alimentary items as the real gifts given to them in return, endowed in their eyes with prestige value, while the common meal is a marginal (though socially essential) feature, in the context of the laws of hospitality.

Lastly, the chiefs of Punt are imagined to be so receptive to the Egyptian ideology as to ask for the granting of life by Pharaoh in a direct encounter: 'As for the king of Egypt, is there any way to his majesty, that we may live by the breath he gives?'¹⁵ This wish, expressed in terms of pure Egyptian orthodoxy, is quite unthinkable to the chiefs of Punt. Yet it clinches the compatibility of the exchange act with the Egypt-centred ideology, and in preparing the conditions for the following scenes where the chiefs of Punt are shown personally bringing to Egypt what has by now become true tribute.¹⁶

So, back home, the Egyptian traders are bringing nothing obtained by the use of weapons or money: it is the native chiefs who march toward the Pharaoh, loaded with marvellous goods (the same supplies named *ḥnw* on the spot are named *b'ḥt* when brought to Egypt). They lay down their tribute while asking for a gift in return that is purely ideological, namely life. Moreover, all the goods of southern origin are presented together to Pharaoh (and by Pharaoh to the gods). The income both from long-distance trade and taxation are described together, listed together, shown together, even if the difference in terminology is precise enough: 'Presentation of the marvels (*b'ḥt*) of Punt, the treasures of the God's land, together with the supplies (*ḥnw*) of the countries of the South, with the impost (*b'k*) of the wretched Kush.'¹⁷ From the ideological point of view, it is in fact the same thing: the control over Nubia and Punt are different in their ways but equivalent in their substance and results.

The difficulties in communication remain, and make the arrival of the 'marvels' more uncertain and irregular when compared to strictly planned taxation. The best solution is then to 'establish for him (= Amun) a Punt in his house', that is to plant myrrh trees in the courtyard of the temple.¹⁸ This does not imply a renunciation of control over Punt. On the contrary, it implies daily and direct control: the 'deported' trees represent their country that Pharaoh controls so strictly that he has Punt at home. But of course the trees transplanted to the centre of the world will grow far more vigorously than they would have done on the terraces of Punt at the remotest end of the world.¹⁹

27

Wen-Amun and Zakar-Ba'al: Gift or Trade?

The trade negotiations carried on by the Theban envoy Wen-Amun and Zakar-Ba'al king of Byblos must be seen against a complex economic and political background.¹ The two countries are at the same technological level, and they employ a common measure of value in their trade: each partner is aware of what the other wants and why, and the value that he is disposed to place on it. The specific object of negotiation between them – wood of the cedar tree – is a raw material; this implies that Byblos is a peripheral country and Egypt the central one, where the raw material is converted into usable products. But the economic sophistication of Byblos turns the tables on Egypt, especially since the latter's need for cedar is much greater than the need of Byblos to export it. A similar situation in the Amarna period put the Alashiya king in a strong position: he ruled a commercially developed country (the Cyprus of today) that monopolized another essential material, copper. This explains the impudent tone of the small Cypriot king in comparison with the humble and pressing requests of the Mitanni or Kassite kings.

The political relations between Byblos and Egypt must also be considered. At the time of Wen-Amun's trip, Egypt (and especially the Theban kingdom, which was remote from the Mediterranean) had no means of exerting political pressure on Byblos.² Yet the memory was still fresh of the political control traditionally exerted over it by the Egyptian kings. This encourages Wen-Amun to say to the king of Byblos: 'I have come in quest of timber for the great noble bark of Amun-Ra, king of gods. What your father did, what your grandfather did, you too will do it!'³ But this merely provokes resentment on the part of Zakar-Ba'al, who points out that even in the past, in the golden days of Egyptian power, the wood was not supplied without payment:

'True, they did it. If you pay me for doing it, I will do it! My forefathers carried out this business after Pharaoh had sent six ships laden with the goods of Egypt, and they had been unloaded into their storehouses. You, what have you brought for me?' He had the daybook of his forefathers brought and had it read before me. They found entered in his book 1.000 *dbn* of silver and all sorts of things. He said to me: 'If the ruler of Egypt were the lord of what is mine and I were his servant, he would not have sent silver and gold to say: "Carry out the business of Amun". It was not a royal gift that they gave to my father! I too, I am not your servant, nor am I the servant of him who sent you!'⁴

Modern scholarship has insisted too much on contrasting the earlier period, when Byblos was a vassal of Egypt, with the time of Wen-Amun, when Byblos was fully independent. The influence of the political situation on the economic (im)balance and type of negotiations is not that obvious. Not only was it possible for Zakar-Ba'al to discover the records of past payments in his archives, but we also have independent sources showing that at the apex of Egyptian power the cedars of Lebanon were obtained just as he said. The chief treasurer of Tuthmosis III, Sennefer by name, relates that he obtained cedar from Byblos in exchange for payments, though these were obviously disguised as offerings to Hathor in line with the ideological convention already met in the Punt negotiations:

[...] I entered the forest-preserve [...] I caused that there be presented to her (= Hathor) offerings of millions of things on behalf of his majesty [...] in Byblos, that I might give them to her lord for her heart's satisfaction [...] I brought away (timbers of) 60 cubits in their length [...] I brought them down from the highlands of God's Land. They reached as far as the forest-preserve [...] I sailed on the Great Green with a favourable breeze, landing in Egypt [...]⁵

What can be read between the lines of the Egyptian celebrative text can be read more explicitly in the Byblian diplomatic correspondence. The reply of Zakar-Ba'al (no payment, no cedar) finds a perfect parallel in a letter of Rib-Adda, the submissive king of Byblos three centuries before:

Since my lord wrote for boxwood: they take it from the lands of Zalhi and from Ugarit. But I cannot send my ships there because Aziru is hostile to me, and all the *ḥazānu* are his allies: at their pleasure their ships go and take what they want. Moreover, why does the king give

everything for sustenance to the *ḥazānu* my colleagues, but to me he gives nothing? Formerly, there were sent to my fathers silver and everything for their sustenance from the Palace ... Why is nothing given to me from the Palace?⁶

Rib-Adda's argument is complicated by the interference of the Aziru problem and the comparison with the other kings, but otherwise it is the same: formal acknowledgement of dependence, request for payment (silver) and allusion to former payments in the time of the fathers. Sennefer's boast, Rib-Adda's letter and Wen-Amun's story are different in emphasis and literary form. But they are part of the same procedure, more or less stable through the political vicissitudes of the era and diverging only in the perspectives of the negotiating parties.

In analysing the text of Wen-Amun's narrative, it is best to leave aside the evolution of the political relationship between Egypt and Byblos. The occasional vagaries that constitute the literary substance of the novel – the cleverness and cunning of the Egyptian envoy – should also be ignored. What remains is a pattern of negotiation that reflects the conventions of the time. The nature of the negotiation becomes clear and meaningful if we keep two levels separate: the commercial level (entrusted to Zakar-Ba'al and substantiated by action) and the ideological level (entrusted to Wen-Amun and limited to speeches).

The commercial level is interesting because it testifies to a kind of commercial bargaining that can be seen in other texts as well, and may be regarded as the norm at the end of the Bronze age. The real negotiation is carried on according to the following moves:

1. Wen-Amun asks for timber without revealing any gifts to be offered in exchange and without even hinting at any.
2. Zakar-Ba'al refuses to supply any timber on such conditions.
3. Wen-Amun states that gifts might arrive from Egypt.
4. Zakar-Ba'al sends a request to Egypt for payment/gifts, together with a 'sample' of seven cedar logs.
5. Payments/gifts arrive from Egypt.
6. Zakar-Ba'al declares that he is satisfied, and supplies the cedar logs – in their hundreds.

The essence of the negotiation is captured in move 4, when Zakar-Ba'al says that he is not ready to supply the logs but sends a sample of them nevertheless. This clearly indicates that the refusal is not definitive: we are disposed to negotiate but we want to be paid adequately – and in advance.

The same procedure is employed by the king of Alashiya in the fourteenth century. In reply to a request from Egypt for copper, he answers that he cannot supply it, but at the same time he sends a sample:

Behold, I send to you 500 (shekels) of copper, I send to you as a gift to my brother. My brother, do not be angry because the copper is few. It is because in my land the hand of my lord Nergal (= a pestilence) killed all the men of my land, and nobody is left to make copper ... You are my brother: send me silver in large amount, let my brother give me the gods' silver, and (then) I will send to my brother everything my brother wants ... Moreover, my brother, the silver I asked, send it in great amount, oh my brother! And the objects that I asked, may my brother send, and may my brother execute all my words, and I (too) will execute all the words you said to me.⁷

In addition to payment for his goods, the king of Alashiya also asks for the satisfactory resolution of outstanding problems: payment for timber already sent and restitution of the properties of a Cypriot merchant who had died in Egypt. It is clear that the reference to the pestilence is an excuse (to be immediately forgotten if silver arrives in large amounts), and that the 5 kg of copper are just a symbolic anticipation of the large shipment that the Pharaoh can obtain if he is willing to pay for it.

A similar procedure is also employed by the king of Hatti in the thirteenth century BC. In reply to a request from Assyria for iron, he replies that he cannot supply it because of the season but at the same time he sends back an iron dagger.⁸ The similarity of the procedures of which these documents provide evidence is close enough for us to conclude that the pattern was well known and widely used.

In respect to the negotiations of the fourteenth–thirteenth centuries, some deterioration in ceremonial form takes place in Wen-Amun's narrative, on the part of both partners. Thus, instead of pleading diplomatic pretexts (like the epidemic alluded to by the Alashiya king or the bad season mentioned by the Hatti king), in move 2 Zakar-Ba'al states plainly that the problem is economic. As for Wen-Amun, the kind of reaction that he makes in move 3 is also unknown in the negotiations of the fourteenth–thirteenth centuries. Having said this, it is probable that Wen-Amun's negotiation explicitly records moves that were less formal in character. Such moves were obviously not recorded in the letters of the Alashiya and Hatti kings but – in the direct dialogue with the messenger – possibly executed by them nevertheless. Furthermore, we cannot rule out

the possibility that the official letter sent by Zakar-Ba'al to Egypt mentioned some diplomatic pretext along with the request for payment.

The negotiation is in any case a commercial one in its fullest sense (with use of silver and gold for payment),⁹ and carried on according to the current procedures, of which both partners were aware. Nevertheless, it is heavily overlaid in Wen-Amun's narrative by a mostly ideological discourse along normal Egyptian lines: the function of foreign countries is to supply raw materials necessary to Amun, in return for which Amun grants life. This tributary view of trade is perfectly understood by Zakar-Ba'al, who replies with strong and scornful statements of his independence, statements supported by the unquestionable fact that the previous supplies of cedar had been paid for. In fact Wen-Amun put message and recipient together in the wrong way, addressing the trade partner in terms more appropriate to an account of the negotiation designed for the inner Egyptian public, for the glory of Pharaoh and of Amun. Wen-Amun's ideological discourse, if really developed in parallel to the actual negotiation, could only make his partner angry and result in difficulties and delay. But we have to remember that Wen-Amun's narrative is more a 'secondary' than a 'primary' type of document. Addressed to the inner Egyptian audience, it requires the use of utterances more fitting to this than to the characters in the plot.

At the heart of the ideological speech, we find the following illuminating passage:

As to your saying, that former kings sent silver and gold: if they had owned life and health, they would not have sent these things. It was in place of life and health that they sent these things to your fathers! But Amun-Ra, king of gods, he is the lord of life and health!¹⁰

The ranking of goods is clear: gold and silver are placed lower (as with dignity and prestige) than life and health. In terms of economic anthropology, Wen-Amun's discourse would be as follows: by converting goods down into money, Zakar-Ba'al was losing prestige; by converting them up into life and health, he would have acquired it. Moreover, by choosing to be paid immediately (even in advance), the king of Byblos had lost a great opportunity. This was the opportunity to let Amun 'get into debt',¹¹ and then permit him to 'pay off his debts' by granting a prolongation of life that would be much more valuable than the timber he had received in exchange:

Should you not rejoice and have a stela made for yourself, and say on it: 'Amun-Ra, king of gods, sent me Amun-of-the-road, his (divine) envoy,

together with Wen-Amun, his human envoy, in quest of timber for the great noble bark of Amun-Ra, king of gods. I felled it, I loaded it, I supplied my ships and my crews. I let them reach Egypt so as to beg for me from Amun fifty years of life over and above my allotted fate.¹²

Nevertheless, Zakar-Ba'al insisted on choosing a thoroughly banal commercial exchange. In so doing, he passed up the opportunity to have the kind of relationship of equality with the god that produces an increased return via the exchange of gifts.

The fact is, however, that everybody has his own ideology and his own gods. Wen-Amun can well daydream of preparing for himself a funerary inscription of the kind Sennefer put in his tomb. But as for the kings of Byblos, rather than accepting the stela inscription suggested by Wen-Amun, they stressed the role of Ba'alat of Byblos; they also focused on the items obtained from Egypt instead of on timber supplies. Nevertheless, they retained their hope for longer lives as a reward for their conduct.

As it happens, we have a royal inscription from Byblos that is written one century later than the Wen-Amun story and inscribed upon an Egyptian statue: 'Statue which Abi-Ba'al king of Byblos, son of [...] king of Byblos, brought from Egypt for the Ba'alat of Byblos his lady. May the Ba'alat of Byblos prolong the days of Abi-Ba'al and his years over Byblos.'¹³ This text strongly suggests a transaction quite similar to that in which Wen-Amun was involved, and with a similar background. Such transactions were 'read' by the two partners in opposite but symmetrical ways. Both emphasized the good or goods imported, both ignored the payment or gift made in return, and both instead theorized the ideological return of 'prolongation of life'.

28

The Annals of Tuthmosis III: Tribute or Gift?

In the Annals of Tuthmosis III,¹ the goods arriving in Egypt are recorded annually as a direct consequence of the military victories of Pharaoh,² but classified differently. Apart from 'booty' (*h'q*)³ obtained from the battlefield after a victory or from plundering a conquered town, the other incoming goods are labelled *b'k* 'production',⁴ *inw* 'supply', or *bi't* 'marvels'.⁵ Examples of the three types of delivery are as follows:

Production (*b'k*) of the wretched Kush: gold x00 *dbn* and 6 shekels; 36 negro slaves, male and female; 111 oxen and calves, 185 bulls, total 306; besides vessels laden with ebony, ivory, all the good products of this country, together with the harvest of this country.⁶

The supply (*inw*) of the chief of Ashur: genuine lapis lazuli: a large block making 20 *dbn* and 9 shekels; genuine lapis lazuli: two blocks; total: three; and pieces making 30 *dbn*; total 50 *dbn* and 9 shekels. Fine lapis lazuli from Babylon. Vessels from Ashur of *hrtt*-stone in colors, [...] very many.⁷

Marvels (*bi't*) brought to the fame of his majesty from Punt: dried myrrh, 240 measures.⁸

This classification is based on differences in the status of the supplying countries, the kind of goods supplied and the regularity of their arrival.

As to the supplying countries, they are arranged in three concentric belts. The inner belt of *b'k*-paying lands is an extension of the Egyptian administration in foreign lands. It consists of Nubia and limited parts of Syria-Palestine: the 'harbours' on the coast and an agricultural area

between Megiddo and Akko. The middle belt of the *ʾmw*-supplying countries is divided into a series of kingdoms whose local rulers personally present their contributions to the Pharaoh⁹ – the text of the Annals making no difference between ‘independent’ great kings and the small kings who are ‘vassals’ of Egypt. The *ʾmw* area includes Cyprus, the Egean (Tanaya), an East African country (Genebtu) and the whole of south-west Asia. The outer belt, whence the ‘marvels’ come, consists of Punt, and is regarded as lying beyond the reach of the Egyptian armies and outside the civilized world. Notice that ‘booty’ is also taken from the middle belt: if the foreign kingdoms do not agree to surrender their contributions spontaneously, they will be defeated, punished and plundered. No plundering takes place in the inner belt, of course, since it is under Egyptian administration, and in the outer belt it is impossible, not least because this region is too remote.

The kind of supplies is also different. Of course, the booty acquired after a field battle takes the form of prisoners, horses and chariots, armour and weapons, and sometimes includes the tent of the defeated king. If plundering continues after the victory in the surrounding countryside or the conquered city, the booty will include cattle and grain, precious stones and metals. The *bʾk*-tax is basically composed of slaves, cattle, cereals – basic agro-pastoral production. The characteristic products of the region are also included: gold, ivory and ebony in the case of Nubia;¹⁰ timber,¹¹ wine, oil and incense in the case of the Syrian ports. The *ʾmw* supplies have a wider range, which includes slaves and agro-pastoral items, with an emphasis on wine/oil/incense rather than cereals, and on horses rather than cattle. However, they are better typified by gold and silver, precious stones, metals in ingots and metallic objects, wood and wooden objects, textiles, stone vessels, etc. Special attention is paid to the value and distinctiveness of foreign workmanship: ‘silver vessels of the workmanship of Djahi,’ ‘a silver vessel of the workmanship of Keftiu’.¹² Finally, the ‘marvels’ of Punt include myrrh, first and foremost, but also slaves and cattle, ivory, ebony and the skins of exotic animals.¹³

A third difference lies in the pace and reliability of the inflow of goods. At one extreme is the *bʾk*, the amount and yearly pace of which are established through administrative planning and management; at the other is the *bʾt*, the arrival of which is so rare as to produce astonishment. In the middle is the *ʾmw*, which is fairly common but unpredictable in both nature and quantity. For the *bʾk*, the preferential connection with the terms *nt-ʾ* ‘stipulation, compulsory agreement’,¹⁴ and *ḥtr* ‘(administrative) obligation’,¹⁵ is highly instructive and can be observed both in the Annals and in contemporary texts:

Behold, the harbors were supplied with everything according to their income, according to their stipulations of each year; the *b'k* of Lebanon was according to their stipulations of each year with the chiefs of Lebanon.¹⁶

The princes of Retenu who drag the beams on oxen to the shore, it is they who come with their *b'k* to the place where my majesty is, to the Palace ... The Nubians come with every good delivery which is brought as wonders of the south, being obliged with yearly *b'kw* like any subject of my majesty.¹⁷

I have obliged Upper Retenu with silver, gold, lapis lazuli and every precious stone, chariots and horses without number, and large and small cattle according to their quantities. I have caused the princes of Retenu to know their yearly *b'kw*. I have obliged the princes of Nubia with electrum from its veins, with gold, ivory and ebony, just like the dependents of the Palace.¹⁸

It will be clear, therefore, that the Egyptian taxonomy of incoming goods is quite coherent, and the basic point of interest is the contrast between the directly administered areas and an external area with its own political authorities. From the former, revenues are regular both in amount and moment of arrival; from the latter, goods come to Egypt more or less frequently but cannot be planned ahead. The arrival of these goods depends on the political relationships obtaining between Pharaoh and the foreign rulers concerned, which – in contrast to those of the inner (*b'k*) and remote (*b't*) belts – tend to take on a ‘personalized’ character.

The translation of the Egyptian terminology into our own is not a small problem, since translation implies an evaluation of the economic, political, and ideological implications of the language in question. Now, the *h'q* and *b't* terms pose no special problem; the usual translation of *b'k* as ‘impost’ or ‘tax’ – even if distant from its proper meaning, ‘production’ – is also basically appropriate in expressing its derivation from directly administered territories. But for *mw* the problem is serious, the two current translations as ‘tribute’ or ‘gift’ being the result of a misleading and misguided approach.¹⁹ It is misleading when the political status of the supplying country is deduced from such a translation: as a subject (if one translates ‘tribute’) or as an independent country (if one translates ‘gift’). It is misguided when the translation is based on the knowledge of the political status of the supplying country (translating ‘gift’ in the case of Hatti or Ashur, but ‘tribute’ in the case of Retenu). In both cases, we

introduce a distinction of our own to a word that is indifferent in this respect. The Egyptian classification of supplies, while attentive in separating those from a directly administered territory from those externally obtained, is quite unconcerned with the status of foreign kingdoms as either 'dependent' or 'independent'. Such a distinction is drastically solved *a priori* by the Egyptian worldview: Pharaoh's power is endowed with an absolute pre-eminence and centrality so that the difference is irrelevant, even non-existent.

A differentiation of the denotative and connotative levels becomes necessary at this point. At the denotative level (the technical meaning, devoid of emotional implications) *ḥnw* means merely 'supply': the term defines the physical displacement of a material good and its change of ownership, and more particularly a displacement toward the subject. It subsumes therefore our two terms 'tribute' and 'gift' as well as many more possible terms. This neutral denotation does exclude a very strong political connotation of the term.²⁰ In a very tiresome way, it is repeatedly emphasized that the outer countries bring their goods to Egypt because of their lower status, real or possible subjugation, military defeat, fear or the renown of Pharaoh. Even the most distant and independent kings deliver their products for this kind of reason: 'Supply of Hatti ... when his majesty was coming back to Egypt, after having gone to Naharina and enlarged the borders of Egypt.'²¹ Outside the Annals, the 'Poetic Stela' of Tuthmosis III – to quote just one example among many – describes the foreign rulers thus: 'They came with their supplies on their backs, bowing down to your majesty, according to my order.'²² And the tomb inscriptions of the officials of Tuthmosis III state the same fact, mixing together countries of different political status as if all of them were subjects of Egypt. Here is Rehmire: 'Receiving the supplies of the southern countries, together with the supply of Punt, the supply of Retenu, the supply of Keftiu, the supplies of all the lands that the fame of his majesty, the king Menheperre, brought in.'²³ And here is Menheperresonb: 'Praise be to the lord of Both Lands, and obeisance to the good god by the chiefs of every country. They applaud to the victories of his majesty. Their supplies are on their backs: silver, gold, lapis lazuli, malachite, every precious stone.'²⁴

The pictures associated with the texts confirm and make more clear-cut this impression: the submission of the suppliers to the receiver is evident in every scene.²⁵ In sum, the flow of supplies is the result and demonstration of the higher position of Egypt and of Pharaoh all over the world. The political connotation is strong, very strong. But it is in fact just a connotation: it is not a reason for translating *ḥnw* as 'tribute', nor to consider the *ḥnw*-supplying countries juridically as tributaries of Egypt.

At this point it could be stated that we are dealing with a case of propaganda: external supplies produced by trade or gift exchange are recorded and presented as tribute for the sake of control over the inner Egyptian populace. Notice that the tomb inscriptions and pictures are just secondary evidence on the fact that incoming goods are used chiefly for propaganda purposes. The lines of foreign 'chiefs' loaded with their tribute and depositing it in the presence of Pharaoh, bowing down while asking for life, depict public ceremonies that probably take place every New Year and celebrate through these concrete examples the power of Pharaoh all over the world.²⁶

Moreover, the view that we are dealing with a case of propaganda can be supported more readily by a type of document unlike the royal inscriptions but relating to the same episodes involved in the circulation of goods, namely the letters, the very same letters that accompanied the gifts or were accompanied by them. In the Amarna letters, the same supplies of goods that the Egyptian royal inscriptions view as being transported in one direction only, and as demonstrating the superiority of the receiver, are viewed as reciprocal and as demonstrating a parity in rank between the partners. As a result, it could be stated that these supplies were 'in reality' the product of a process of gift exchange and that, in the Annals of Tuthmosis III and similar texts, it is simply pretended that they were 'tribute'. In the letters the focus is not on incoming goods (as in the monumental inscriptions) but on outgoing items: 'As a gift (*šulmānu*) for you, I let be brought to you three minas of real lapis lazuli and five teams of horses with five wooden chariots'; 'As a gift for you, I let be brought to you a fine chariot with two horses, and a "date" of real lapis lazuli.'²⁷

A feature that the Egyptian celebrative view did not record at all is here immediately evident, namely that Pharaoh is also sending gifts to the other kings, so that the movement of goods is multi-directional, a real exchange. Here is a passage of a letter written by Amenophis III to Kadashman-Enlil:

Behold, as a gift (*šulmānu*) for your new house I let to be brought to you: an ebony bed, inlaid with ivory and gold; three ebony beds inlaid with gold; an ebony head-rest inlaid with gold; a large ebony chair inlaid with gold; five ebony chairs inlaid with gold; four ebony chairs inlaid with gold.²⁸

All of these gifts, going in either direction, ignore any constraint or threat (whether military or political), and follow only the social conventions, the great prize being an increase in prestige. Moreover they are embedded in a

very well understood context of 'brotherhood', 'friendship' and 'good relations'; they are associated with intermarriage; they are introduced by greetings which involve asking about the good health of the partner and providing reassurance about one's own.

The result of this comparison between celebrative inscriptions and letters seems to be that the former give a biased view, the latter the true situation. But such a conclusion would be simplistic: the epistolary documentation is also biased. Designed to be convincing, the only difference is that in this case the receiver is a single person and not the general public who are the target of the wall paintings and reliefs. The pattern of political relationships emerging from the letters, and into which the letters fit as constitutive elements, is extremely formal and artificial. It is artificial to view as equal a relationship between partners who are not equal at either the political, military, economic or technological levels. It is artificial to view as arousing no interest the gifts and gifts given in return that are the subject of furious debate and relentless bargaining – objects that are an index of political relationships as well as a channel of commercial acquisition. In short, both the royal inscriptions and the letters have their own conventions, not only 'literary' conventions but also those of the socio-political relationships expressed by them. The different, even contradictory views obviously fit in with the different purposes of the messages, and likewise with the different recipients of the messages. The royal inscriptions, addressed to an inner public, emphasize the elements of prestige, and use historical events in order to show the superiority of the sovereign of the inner country. The letters, addressed to the external partner, give particular attention to practical interests, and make use of conventions favourable to the development of negotiations. The statement that the king of Mitanni is a 'tributary' of the Pharaoh (monumental convention) is as false as the statement that he is his 'brother' (epistolary convention). Yet factual evidence can be found to support both statements, provided it is considered in the frame of the different views of the political relationships.

The two views of the same episode, the one addressed to the inner audience and the other to the outer partner, are clearly incompatible, and this incompatibility produces a serious contrast when the code does not fit with the receiver. In one of his letters the Babylonian king Kadashman-Enlil complains that Pharaoh 'put my chariots amid the chariots of the *ḥazānu* (the Syro-Palestinian kinglets): you did not see them separately. You let them be brought to the presence of the country (all) alike, in order that they be not seen separately.'²⁹ The complaint refers to one of those ceremonial parades that we have already seen in the form of a celebrative recording in the tomb pictures. In such parades all of the goods – whoever

sent them – were naturally merged together, all of them being in fact *ḥnw* in Egyptian terminology. The political status of the sender was not considered because it was meaningless when compared to the eminence of the Pharaoh. Therefore, chariots presented by the king of Babylon and by the Syro-Palestinian kinglets were grouped together. But the Babylonian king was not accustomed to looking on his own gifts as implying subordination, nor was he accustomed to being placed on the same level as the small vassal-kings. He found what he heard to be a true outrage. In fact, he was not supposed to have heard it all: other messages were intended for him as an outer addressee; this message was properly destined for the inner audience, which surely would have considered quite normal the intermixing that the Babylonian king found so offensive. It might also be mentioned that, had the inner Egyptian public had access to the diplomatic correspondence and discovered Pharaoh reciprocating the ‘tribute’ of foreign kings, it ought to have been just as disconcerted as Kadashman-Enlil.

At this point, and going back to the correct translation of the term *ḥnw*, the dilemma ‘tribute or gift’ seems to be more dissolved than solved. Certainly we cannot say that the Asiatic kings were tributaries because they send their *ḥnw*-supplies; but we cannot even say that ‘true’ gifts were disguised as tribute. Both views are at the same time true and biased. The symmetrical view is true, since negotiations and transfers of goods really took place according to the code of brotherhood and reciprocity. The centralized view is also true, since diplomatic contacts were a consequence of the successful Egyptian campaigns in Syria, and also because the Asiatic partners show a degree of submissiveness and a greater interest in exchange than Egypt. And both views are biased in the sense that both want to convince their respective addressees of a preconceived assumption, both use any ‘real’ episode in the perspective of their aims, and both freely select and impute appropriate connotations to the arguments and causal connections. In the case of the centralized view, the aim is to present the local ruler as endowed with invincible power and unparalleled superiority. In the case of the symmetrical view, where the success of the negotiation is so important, the aim is to make the partner feel at ease by concealing (or using only with caution) any element of constraint. Neither seeks a realistic, ‘true’ representation of the political relationships.

29

The Origins of Tribute

The Egyptian kings are not the only ones to view the acquisition of goods from abroad as implying the superiority of the receiver. The boast of Tukulti-Ninurta to be 'one who receives the burdensome contributions of the four quarters in the city Ashur'¹ is in the same vein. Are all the contributions recorded in the middle-Assyrian royal inscriptions regarded as real tribute? Or, to be more precise: do the suppliers also regard them as such? This is difficult to ascertain from the stereotyped language and unifying ideology of the inscriptions. In reality it seems that sometimes they do and sometimes they do not. For instance, in a text of 'Tiglat-pileser I' we find three passages (in close sequence and using the same terminology) each of which must be evaluated differently.

In the first case the existence of some kind of tributary relationships seems obvious: 'I subdued at my feet 30 kings of the Nairi lands. I took hostages from them, received their tribute (*madattu*) of teams of horses in harness, and imposed upon them tax and impost.'² This is a summary of more detailed accounts in earlier inscriptions, where military pressure is given emphasis and the conquest is described as a real fact.

But the same text continues with a quite different episode: 'I conquered the entire land of Amurru. I received tribute (*madattu*) from the lands of Byblos, Sidon and Arwad.'³ Here a tributary relationship cannot be realistically imagined. The area is far away from the military reach of Assyria, and the expedition remains isolated and driven more by ideological and commercial than military concerns. No military encounter is mentioned and the 'tribute' is not established as a regular obligation in the future. Other features of the text also suggest that this expedition was conceived as a largely peaceful one which would be more likely to issue in trade relations than in compulsory tribute. These include the details of the tribute itself ('I received a crocodile and a large female ape of

the sea coast')⁴ and the journey from Arwad to Sumura on a boat 'killing at sea a *naḥiru*, which is called sea-horse'.⁵

Somewhat in between is the third passage in the same text: 'Finally, upon my return, I became lord of the entire land of Hatti and imposed upon Ini-Teshub, king of the land of Hatti, hostages, tax, tribute (*bilta madatta*) and cedar beams.'⁶ Karkemish (the capital city of Ini-Teshub) is never mentioned in Tiglat-pileser's accounts of his military successes; the town is strong enough and the 'great land of Hatti' is powerful enough to discourage an Assyrian military thrust in that direction. Yet the timber supplies seem to be regulated by an agreement – whether freely entered into or not, however, we cannot judge.

The three cases analysed here seem therefore to have been rather different. Nevertheless, in the Assyrian celebrative inscriptions, which are more or less similar to the Egyptian ones, the different historical realities are all presented under the general label of a tributary relationship.

In another kind of text, and in the framework of another political ideology, offerings of tribute are represented as gifts rather than the other way round. And the statements concerned are as much paradoxical to any reader who does not share the inner coherence of the code. For instance, after the detailed list of the heavy tribute imposed on the Ugaritic kingdom, the Hittite king continues:

These are the gifts (*šulmānu*) that the great king has put to the charge of the king of Ugarit; but he is not obliged to give anything else to the noblemen or to the king's sons. When a king's son or a nobleman goes from Hatti to Ugarit as a messenger, if it pleases the king of Ugarit to give gifts, he may give; but if he does not want to give a present (*qīštu*), he shall not give: this is not an obligation.⁷

The term *šulmānu* is typically used to describe reciprocal gifts, those prompted by strong social considerations and having an auspicious character. Here, however, it is employed to indicate tribute, and the 'tribute' itself is in fact a list of personal gifts! Moreover, the vassal is given an assurance that further gifts are not obligatory. In sum, the tribute is a gift like any other, but this particular gift is not left to the discretion of the donor or to any reflex of social conditioning. Instead, it is made compulsory by a treaty that is either entered into voluntarily by the vassal or, better still, granted by the great king as a reward for his loyalty. The propaganda purpose is also evident in this case. It is not directed toward the inner audience but toward the vassal king, who will hopefully be induced by it to think well of the link established between him and his

overlord. It is true that this connection is binding but the parties to it are autonomous agents who, by their own free will, have entered a relationship from which they both can expect advantages.

The two different views – the tribute is a gift/the gift is tribute – suggest a basic common ground for contributions moving through different hierarchical levels, and pose the problem of the origin of the tribute system. Gifts presented at fixed times by someone in a lower to someone in a higher social stratum, under the pressure of social and cultural norms, tend to become a tribute; the social conditioning involved tends to become political and finally juridical. And when gifts of this sort have become compulsory tribute, more gifts have to be presented in order to show that the delivery is not limited to the minimum requested; the additional gifts then tend to become fixed and compulsory. Are references to ‘tribute and gifts’ just a stylistic device, or are they an accurate description of a twofold contribution, the first element being compulsory and the second more free? The list of the Ugaritic tribute to the Hatti king distinguishes between the ‘core’ of the tribute, a small ‘supplement’, and then a series of personal *šulmānu*-gifts to the king, members of the royal family and high palace officials:

12 minas and 20 shekels of gold, the 20 being a supplement, 1 golden cup weighing one mine: this is the core of the tribute (*mandattu*). 4 garments, 1 large garment, 500 (shekels of) wool dyed in purple, 500 (shekels of) wool dyed in dark purple: to the Sun, the great king, his lord. 1 golden cup weighing 30 (shekels), 1 garment, 100 (shekels of) wool dyed in purple, 100 (shekels of) wool dyed in dark purple: to the queen. (The same to the prince.) 1 silver cup weighing 30 (shekels), 1 garment, 100 (shekels of) wool dyed in purple, 100 (shekels of) wool dyed in dark purple: to the *tuppanuri*. (The same to three more court officials.) Nobody else, among the noblemen (who are staying) by the Sun, the king his lord, on the day Niqmadu will bring his tribute, will pretend from Niqmadu a gift (*šulmānu*).⁸

At this point we had better understand that the original tribute (*mandattu*) was accompanied by gifts (*šulmānu*) for the court officials who were present when the tribute was delivered: a species somewhere between a ‘guest’s gift’ and an ‘audience fee’. These additional gifts are by now so common that they even appear in fixed amounts in the treaty tablets. The Hittite king just acknowledges the voluntary character of ‘further additions’ to the same or other palace officials, in Hattusha and in Ugarit. This means that, since the voluntary gifts that originally accompanied the

tribute have come to form part of the obligation, the tendency is toward giving and exacting more 'voluntary' gifts in order to express personal generosity and friendship – a third stage in the same process!

Many centuries later, Assyrian tribute still follows the same distinction between a strictly contractual tribute (*madattu*) and an additional but now equally fixed gift (*nāmurtu*, corresponding to the *šulmānu* of the Hatti-Ugarit treaty). And the gifts are again given personally to the various members of the royal family and the court.⁹ Now, if the additional gifts become a part of the tribute in the 'second stage' of the process, could this not also have been true for the 'first stage'? Unfortunately, this question cannot receive a proper answer here; it requires a sociological analysis of the origins of tributary relationships. I can suggest only that the sharp distinction between tribute and gift, compulsory and voluntary supply, and forced and free behaviour, is probably too rigid, somewhat idealized, in comparison to the social and historical realities of the period. Some compulsory element is always present in unequal relationships, though the stronger partner usually employs a social rather than (or before) a physical constraint. In principle, the respective amounts of voluntariness and constraint may find different points of balance, but the passing of time adds the element of custom and tradition, which is a very strong stimulus to a fixed engagement. Lastly, it must be emphasized that a complex tribute/gift supply can be economically heavier to bear but is socially more rewarding than merely having to deliver tribute.

Of course, the international tribute system represents the transfer onto a larger scale of the internal mechanisms of the states comprising its membership, and the latter are in their turn an enlargement of the petty dealings characteristic of interpersonal relations. Thus, in order to understand better the system of inter-state tribute we should also be familiar with the intra-state and inter-personal networks, with the interplay between reciprocity and redistribution, and the standardization of occasional but repeated acts. This range of exchanges cannot be fully analysed here but some characteristic features can be summarized.

In the middle-Assyrian kingdom, the tendency to fix certain kinds of compulsory payments that were originally free gifts is well attested. The *nāmurtu*-deliveries (mainly from high officials of the court or provincial towns) to the king were a sort of 'audience fee', 'a payment made by the king's subjects whenever they came to him for a favour or some kind of help'.¹⁰ It is difficult to imagine anyone refusing to pay this customary fee, and even if the deliveries seem to vary in size, they are nevertheless recorded by the palace administration (with supplier's name and date) as regular income. These 'audience gifts' are a good parallel to the additional

gifts given by Hittite vassals when entering the presence of their overlord in order to deliver tribute.

The middle-Assyrian *šulmānu*-payment, 'a gift to an official entrusted with a legal case, to induce him to deal with the case', also became quite regular and legal.¹¹ Both kinds of gift (the terms being indicative of the original spirit of the delivery) are in course of becoming taxes, demonstrating the shift from a social to an administrative obligation.

At another ideological level, the network of gift exchange within the middle-Assyrian kingdom is well represented in ritual. On the occasion of the New Year renewal of the Assyrian kingship, the ritual involved requires *šulmānu*-gifts from the participants who are admitted to the presence of the king, gifts from the king (one silver mina each) in return, and *qištu*-gifts to the gods.¹² The amount of the *šulmānu* not being specified, it is probable that it was left up to the participants to decide, albeit within traditional limits. In this ritual occasion it is possible that the royal gifts had to exceed in value those given by the participants. But this does not apply in normal political and administrative encounters.

The middle-Assyrian *šulmānu*-gifts to public officials introduce us to the level of the minor cells of the state, which is poorly documented. But an unusual group of documents originating in Nuzi in south-east Assyria in the fifteenth century BC gives an insight into the ways a local authority was able to collect payments and services that seem to lie somewhere between compulsory taxation and complete liberality. The mayor of Nuzi is charged on an endless series of counts of corruption. Among the testimonies about goods and labour being exacted in all kinds of illegal ways, we read in particular:

Thus Hinzuri, the wife of Ziliya: I gave to Peshkilishu a sheep as a fee (*ta'tu*) and thus I (said): 'With regard to my lands, attend to my lawsuit with Kariru'. My lawsuit he did not conduct. I spoke (to him) about my sheep, and he smote me and my sheep he kept; furthermore he seized me and took six minas of copper. Thus he (said): 'For last year I am taking (it)'.¹³

What seems to be considered wrong is not the exacting of the bribe but the failure to perform the service for which it was paid. It is clear that what the Nuzi documents, in the context of a judicial claim, negatively label as *ta'tu* ('fee', 'bribe'), is the very same thing that the middle-Assyrian texts, in an administrative context, positively label as *šulmānu* ('gift').¹⁴ The same contribution, if paid to the right authority is right; it is a feature of the correct system from which both parties receive their gain. If it is paid to the wrong authority, however, it becomes wrong, an unsuccessful attempt to corrupt.

The very same antithesis is transferred to the international level in the case of Wasashatta, as narrated by Adad-nirari I. The Hanigalbat king was bound (by oath) to bring yearly gifts (*tāmartu*) to the presence of the Assyrian king. When he rebels, he addresses the Hatti king for help. And the Hatti king – like the Nuzi mayor! – took the bribe (*ta'tu*) but did not provide the military assistance which had been promised in return.¹⁵ This kind of contribution immediately reveals its ambiguous and irregular character only when delivered to somebody other than 'us'. Otherwise it is a correct gift, on the way to becoming a form of fixed tribute.

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Equal vs. Unequal Marriages

The protest by the Babylonian King at having his chariots mixed up with those of the small kings (see Chapter 26) has a parallel (in the same letter) with the protest over his sister having been lumped together with the other women in the pharaonic harem. The fate of the princess (daughter of the previous Babylonian king, and sister of the present one) is of course relevant in the frame of a negotiation for a second princess (daughter of the present king) to be sent to Egypt.

Since you wrote to me: 'You told my messengers, while your wives were standing all together at your presence: "Look your lady who stays in your presence"'. But my messengers did not recognize her, whether she was (really) my sister (the person) who was with you.' You also wrote: 'My messengers did not recognize her, who could recognize her?' So you said. Why don't you send a man of value who can tell you a word of truth, and the greetings of your sister who is here, and order (him) to enter and look her house and her position by the king? And since you wrote: 'Perhaps she is the daughter of a dependant, or else of a Kashkean, or else a woman of Hanigalbat, or perhaps she is from Ugarit, whom my messengers have seen: who told them that she was with you? She did not open her mouth and did not say anything to them' ...¹

The polemic between the two kings deteriorates further in the rest of the letter, focusing on gifts. In the Babylonian view the son-in-law should send more of them, while in the Egyptian view he need only send gifts by way of reciprocation of those received from the father-in-law. Pharaoh can even ask sarcastically: 'Is it nice, that you give away your daughters in order to obtain the gift of your neighbours?'²

But the basic misunderstanding is about the status of the Asiatic princesses 'married' to Pharaoh. From the Asiatic point of view, the marriage of a great king's daughter with another great king is of course a marriage of equals, and she should become the queen. Not surprisingly, therefore, they are disconcerted and irritated to discover that their princesses, once arrived in Egypt, should 'disappear' into the crowd of women of mixed origin in the royal harem, with no special rank or role provided for them.³ Of course, it is ironical that the Babylonian king should complain of the difficulty experienced by his messengers in recognizing the princess, since he is the same person who suggested to Pharaoh: 'Send me a nice girl as if she were your daughter. Who could say: "She is not the king's daughter"?'⁴

The perspectives of the two kings are similar yet contrasting. The Babylonian king, unable to obtain a true Egyptian princess, contemplates the possibility of disguising a commoner as one, while the Egyptian king, who finds no difficulty in obtaining a Babylonian princess, disguises her as a commoner. The prestige of the Babylonian king is increased by the possibility – whether real or pretended – of obtaining an Egyptian wife; this would be an exceptional achievement, to be highlighted for the benefit of the public. By contrast, the prestige of the Egyptian king is increased by obtaining women from any foreign land and mixing them all together (exactly like *inw* supplies), irrespective of their former rank or the rank of their country of origin. From the Egyptian perspective, of course, this rank is in any case miserable and irrelevant.

Of course, the Egyptian king is aware that the Asiatic countries have their own hierarchies and conventions. Consequently, the negotiations for acquiring a foreign woman are different. If Pharaoh wants the daughter of a small king, all he has to do is write a letter like the one he wrote to the king of Ammiya: 'Send your daughter to the king your lord, and send gifts: 20 good servants, silver, chariots and good horses. And the king your lord will say to you: "This is good, that you gave gifts to the king, besides your daughter"'.⁵ But if Pharaoh wants the daughter of the great king of Babylon or Mitanni, he has to carry on an endless negotiation. This turns especially on the size of the patrimonial contribution, with the future father-in-law having an interest in overstating the value of the marriage in order to obtain more Egyptian gifts.⁶

The economic aspects of such negotiations may be disguised as problems of prestige:

Haya, the nobleman you sent, has (only) a few chariots and horses with him. Send many chariots and horses, and Haya will bring to you the

king's daughter ... Haya has five chariots: should they bring her to you with five chariots!? Should I send her now, with Haya, the kings my neighbours would say: 'The daughter of the great king is brought to Egypt with five chariots (only)!'.⁷

Presumably, the idea is that the additional chariots sent to bring the Babylonian princess back to Egypt will be loaded with the gifts for which the rest of the letter is asking. More chariots, more gifts, more prestige in the eyes of the neighbouring kings.

During the negotiations, therefore, the positions of a great and a small king require different treatment. But once the Asiatic princesses arrive in Egypt they are mixed together, and the propaganda presentation to the inner Egyptian audience is more or less the same. A case like the one of Ammiya is presented as follows: 'The tribute (*ḥnw*) of the chiefs of Retenu: the daughter of a chief, (with) ornaments of silver, gold, real lapis lazuli, and 30 slaves belonging to her.'⁸ And the arrival of a Mitanni princess (after negotiations of the kind we have seen for Babylon) is presented as follows: 'The Great Royal Consort Tiya, may she live. The name of her father is Yuya, the name of her mother is Thuya. Marvel brought to his majesty: the daughter of the chief of Naharina, Shuttarna, Gilu-Hepa, 317 women of her harem.'⁹ No doubt the Egyptian Tiya remains the first wife and queen, while the exotic princess will shortly disappear into the royal harem. Of course, the prestige that follows obtaining a wife from a great king is greater, and the number of accompanying slaves is tenfold. But these are differences of degree; the nature of the relationship is the same in both cases. And in both cases – whether by the harsh command or the agreeable bargain – the behaviour adopted by Pharaoh to get an Asiatic wife is far removed from the literary model found in the tale of the 'Foredoomed Prince', who wins his exotic princess through love and heroic adventures.¹⁰

In contrast both to the Egyptian system of acquiring foreign women in order to demonstrate worldwide power and the Kassite system of giving away daughters for gold, the Hittite system is more properly political in nature. Daughters of the Hittite king are given in marriage to vassal kings in order to strengthen the influence of the former and the loyalty of the latter. The related treaties duly emphasize that the Hittite princess will be the queen in the vassal kingdom and that her son will inherit the throne: 'I have given the king's daughter Gashuliyawiya to the land of Amurru, to the king's house, to Benteshina as his wife. In the land of Amurru she is the queen. In the future, the son and grandson of my daughter shall exercise kingship in Amurru.'¹¹ Notice that this pattern is preferentially

applied to political refugees (to whom the Hittite king gives his daughters), so that the initial act is rather 'getting a son-in-law' than 'giving away a daughter'.

The same sort of political control is aimed at by the Egyptian king but in a completely different way: 'Behold, the children of the chiefs and their brothers were brought into strongholds in Egypt. Now, whosoever died among these chiefs, his majesty would cause his son to stand in his place.'¹² The Egyptian king, who cannot 'export' daughters, prefers to 'import' Asiatic princes. But the basic difference is that in the Hittite perspective a vassal is expected to be loyal if he is linked by blood ties to the sovereign; in the Egyptian perspective a vassal is expected to be loyal if he has been educated in Egypt. This antithesis of blood/training, or kinship/culture, is quite emblematic of the differences between Egypt and Asia.

At first sight, marriage negotiations seem more likely to arouse the emotions and provoke resentment than those concerning borders or trade, and the way to a satisfactory conclusion is certainly a long one. The course taken by the Hittite-Egyptian relationship is marked by two famous episodes. The first is quite anomalous, and takes place in a period of political and military tension. The widow of Amenophis IV¹³ writes to Shuppiluliuma and asks him if he will provide her with one of his sons as a husband.

Why do you say: 'they may try to deceive me'? If I had a son, would I write to a foreign country in a manner which is humiliating to myself and to my country? You do not trust me and tell me even such a thing. He who was my husband died and I have no sons. Shall I perhaps take one of my servants and make him my husband? I have not written to any other country, I have written (only) to you. People say that you have many sons. Give me one of your sons and he will be my husband and king in the land of Egypt.¹⁴

Shuppiluliuma is obviously perplexed, given the difficult relations between Hatti and Egypt at that time. But the proposal should not have sounded too strange to the ears of the Hittites. After all, they were simply being invited to export a future king rather than the mother of one, and thereby short-circuit the usual procedure. Furthermore, instead of ensuring future control over a small kingdom, the marriage would ensure dominion over a power of equal status. This is not too unusual, after all: Ashur-uballit will attempt the same thing in Babylon, by marrying his daughter Muballitat-Sherua to the Kassite king.¹⁵ So, although the

technicalities are irregular (uxori-local marriage, with displacement of the husband), the link between marriage and political aims is the usual one. Shuppiluliuma's hesitations concern the practical realization of the plan, not its theoretical acceptance. In fact, his first objection seems to have been: had the Egyptian queen also addressed the proposal to somebody else?

But from the Egyptian point of view,¹⁶ the idea of 'getting a husband in' combines oddly the correct direction with the wrong sex. The procedure may be followed only if the Hittite prince is conceived as a foreign male-wife of an Egyptian female-king; after all, a new Hatshepsut is less worrying than a new Hyksos. So the Hittite prince may be imported, after which, of course, he has to 'disappear'. The only problem is that while an Asiatic girl can 'disappear' simply by merging with a crowded royal harem, the male prince (being unique) must be physically eliminated. And this is exactly what happened to the Hittite prince after his arrival in Egypt.¹⁷

Shuppiluliuma's furious reaction is quite similar to that of Ashur-uballit (whose grandson had been eliminated by the Kassites): both invaded the 'murderous country' in order to avenge the killing of their son or grandson. Ashur-uballit was sufficiently successful that he was able to establish his indirect rule over the Kassite kingdom, though Shuppiluliuma did not push further south than the Beqa' – but this is a difference in result, not in procedure. In both cases the right of retaliation provided political, and even territorial, advantages. Can we venture more deeply into the secret thoughts of the Hittite king? Is it possible that he knew what would happen and deliberately sacrificed his son simply in order to establish his right to revenge?

A century later the two countries tried again. This time there was an atmosphere of peace and brotherhood, and Ramesses II obtained one of the daughters of Hattushili III. The marriage was regarded as formally correct from both Egyptian and Hittite points of view, but at that point the coincidence of their sentiments ended. In line with the traditional ideology of Egypt, Ramesses II had certainly conceived, and will eventually celebrate, the marriage as a demonstration of his worldwide power. For his part, though, Hattushili III imagined that the marriage would provide scope for Hittite political interference at the Egyptian court. The crucial point is: was the Hittite princess accepted as the queen in Egypt? For this would have been an important novelty in comparison to the marriages of the Amarna age. There is some support for this argument¹⁸ but it is hardly conclusive, and a second Hittite marriage of Ramesses¹⁹ further complicates the issue. From the Egyptian side, the procedure followed the usual two-act pattern: first, a negotiation,

predicated on acceptance of the conventional parity in rank between the two families and countries; and secondly, a propaganda presentation directed at the inner public according to the orthodox ideology:

I have made for you the land of Hatti as subject to your palace; I have put it into their hearts to present themselves with fearful steps to your *k'*, bearing their impost which their chiefs have captured, all their possession as tribute to the fame of his majesty. His eldest daughter is in front thereof, to satisfy the heart of the lord of Both Lands, the king Ramesses, given life.²⁰

Behold, the great chief of Hatti comes, bringing his eldest daughter, bearing much tribute.²¹

The Egyptian aim was clearly attained, and easily so, since it depended only on the willingness of Ramesses. The Hittite aim, however, depending as it did on the willingness of both partners as well as on the political situation in general, seems to have met no success. We have no trace of a political role played or influence exerted by the two Hittite princesses after their marriage and their acceptance at the Egyptian court.

Yet the success of the Egyptians was only a formal one, a matter of appearance. In reality, even they had to give up something and shift their ideological position from one of insistence on absolute pre-eminence to some degree of acceptance of parity in rank – not only during the negotiations but also in the celebrative texts. Hattushili was alert and more successful than his Amarna forerunners, and the political balance was now different. In the description of the arrival of the Hittite caravan, on the occasion of the second marriage, we read:

The great chief of Hatti caused to be brought the exceedingly rich booty of Hatti ... before his other daughter whom he caused to be brought for Ramesses, to Egypt, for the second time. There was no army which caused them to be brought, there was no chariotry which caused them to be brought. It was the might of the gods of the land of Egypt and the gods of every foreign land which caused the great chiefs of every foreign land to bring their tribute, of themselves, their own selves, to Ramesses.²²

Not only is the submission of the Hittites spontaneous and not the consequence of military defeat, but the gods of both countries are also considered co-authors of the prodigious event. In the passage that follows,

the encounter takes place at the frontier of the two countries, so avoiding the supremely humiliating spectacle of the foreign chiefs bowing down in the presence of Pharaoh. This decision to meet at the frontier and then proceed together is the explicit result of the negotiations, an indication that Hattushili was well aware of the dangers of the Egyptian attitude in relation to true political parity.²³ The fact that some features of the symmetrical view (although overwhelmed by the prevailing tributary view of the text) are accepted even in the celebrative texts, is quite exceptional; they must be considered to be the effect of the atmosphere of parity, alliance and brotherhood established by the treaty some years before (see Chapter 20). The high point of Egyptian acknowledgement of the foreigners' similarity and parity is reached when the princess arrives in Egypt with a double escort of Egyptian and Hittite troops: 'The daughter of the great chief of Hatti marched in front of the army ... They were mingled with foot soldiers and charioteers of Hatti, warriors as well as regulars: they ate and drank (together), not fighting face to face.'²⁴

In the actual negotiations and in the mutual greetings exchanged after the conclusion of the treaty and the marriage, the atmosphere of parity, unity and brotherhood had been in full evidence. Although it is possible that this atmosphere originated on the Hittite side, the Egyptian court provided its own consent to it: 'The daughter of the king of Hatti arrived in the land of Egypt, and two great countries became a single country ... In that day two great countries became a single country, and two great kings became a single brotherhood.'²⁵ We have already seen (Chapter 20) that such a formal acceptance of unity (or, better, coupling) of the two countries, as ratified and symbolized by the royal couple, brought about the overcoming of a deeply rooted Egyptian worldview.

To regard the complete parity and union of two peoples as a consequence of the intermarriage between two royal houses, which in the Egyptian-Hittite relationship is a difficult and incomplete issue, was the normal interpretation of an inter-Asiatic dynastic marriage. Suffice it to quote a passage of the Synchronic History: 'Ashur-bel-kala king of Assyria married the daughter of Adad-apla-iddina king of Karduniash, and took (her) with her vast dowry to Assyria. The peoples of Assyria and of Karduniash mingled with each other.'²⁶ It is symptomatic that the inscription of Ramesses and the Babylonian chronicle (two texts that certainly ignore each other) make use of the very same image of the two peoples 'mingling together' in feasting at the royal wedding. The physical union effected by the royal couple in an exemplary and meaningful way produces an intermingling of their respective peoples: tentatively at the wedding feast, but also at a structural and ideological level.

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Conclusions

Unity and diversity

Throughout this work an effort has been made to combine the use of documents springing from all of the different cultural areas of the ancient Near East. This procedure has its risks – a flattened appreciation of regional variations – but these have been taken into account. Major care has been devoted to specifying the origin (in space, time, typology and social setting) of the various documents used, the aim being to emphasize diversities and similarities alike, according to their actual occurrence.

Every cultural feature lies at the intersection of space and time. As the cultural traditions of particular regions have a specific character of their own, so also do particular chronological periods. A ‘vertical’ analysis, focusing on the development of a particular area through time, will point up features of continuity and evolution, and even breaks in them. A ‘horizontal’ analysis, focusing on the regional differences within a larger area in a limited period, will point up common practices and local peculiarities, and even contrasts between them.

It is possible that the ‘vertical’ approach has greater value but it is also much more widely employed. The usual delimitations of the historiography of the ancient Near East are too often ‘the Hittites’ or ‘the Egyptians’ and too seldom ‘the Late Bronze’ or ‘the fourteenth century’ – probably because of the specializations of scholars rather than deliberate choice framed by theoretical analysis. In this book the opposite strategy has been followed instead: priority has been given to the ‘horizontal’ over the ‘vertical’, a synchronic perspective has been applied in a delimited timespan.

Besides being worthy of attention because less common, the synchronic treatment seems the most likely to allow cultural differences to emerge. It

is true that differences emerging from separate analysis are always subject to the doubt that they are the result of disparities in the documentation and external setting. Real differences should thus be tested on occasions when two or more partners of different origin are in fact interacting on the same problem, and their interaction is recorded in the same text. Of course, the bias resulting from the authorship of the text (unavoidably originating with only one of the partners) becomes a major problem; but if varied documentation is available, including texts written by the different partners, a more balanced evaluation may be attempted.

The well-known regional/national variations emerge quite clearly in this book. Yet, while the technological, political, religious and other differences were already well known, a further one emerges as a result of looking at the various partners in their reciprocal interaction. This is the difference in the cultural models of behaviour of the single kingdoms. Of course, we might still mimic the outdated 'patterns of culture' approach. This would involve us in contrasting the juridically minded Hittite, always anxious to be right; the aggressive Assyrian, too impatient to be recognized as a leader and to let his partners forget his modest origins; the superior and bored Egyptian, always on the verge of 'quitting the game'; and the strange mixture represented by the polish of a decadent tradition and the bad manners of a rough mountaineer which is the Kassite king. Just imagine having all of them in the same room, talking together – through their dragomans, of course. It should be noted that the members of the 'club of the great powers', the dear brothers of so many letters, seem never to have met each other. Even on the battlefield their encounters are rare. Ramesses is unable to distinguish Muwatalli 'hidden' behind his vassals and officers, and when Hurba-tilla is taken prisoner by Kurigalzu, or Kashtiliash by Tukulti-Ninurta, they are no longer great kings but just precious items of booty.

In contrast to the peculiar characteristics of the single cultures, the style of the epoch also emerges. If we must summarize it in two words, we might speak of 'refined ceremonialism' – or, perhaps better, 'suspicious formalism'. There are rules for everything: how to address each other and how to send greetings; how to make war and how to conclude peace; how to give and how to bargain; how to get a wife or how to ask for a physician. There are always such rules in a culture (their sum being in fact the culture itself), but here we are at the intersection of different cultural traditions, in search of an adjustment. The fixing of common rules of behaviour can be compared to the spread of items of the material culture: some pieces of armour, some chariots, some weapons belong to the fourteenth century, but are they Egyptian or Syrian or Mitannian? On the eve of its collapse,

the Near Eastern culture of the Bronze Age reaches its peak in refinement and homogeneity over the whole area. Wherever a palace was located, it was a mesh in the network of cultural interconnections and a base for the spread of the higher culture. There is definitely a system, a regionally articulated system, in the Near East during the Late Bronze period: a political system and an economic system, within which every partner is aware of the existence of the others, knows their potentialities and their idiosyncrasies, and the way to establish contact.

The system is a network of palaces, as already stated, but it includes an essential periphery of non-palace areas as well. Though in part a periphery in the geographical sense, more often this overlaps with the palace-administered area and is a social periphery of refugees, outlaws, brigands. It is essential to keep in mind the ecological and socio-economic complexity of the system even though the documented interactions took place at the level of the royal palaces, through the formalized procedures we are now in a condition to study. These procedures are just the tip of the iceberg, and could not endure in the absence of the submerged society. This is a society where most of the people never went beyond the next village, and were hardly aware of the distance separating them from the royal palace and the state border.

The ideological grid

The starting point and focal hypothesis of my research was the contrast between a centralized and a symmetrical view of international relations. Now that an overall analysis has been completed, an evaluation is needed. Do the opposing views really exist? My feeling is that we must not confuse an analytical tool with the historical reality. The initial hypothesis has proved to be a very helpful device to understand in a more detailed and nuanced way the complex political interplay of the Late Bronze period. It is my opinion that the appropriateness of the initial hypothesis depends on its correspondence to the analytical tools of the time, i.e. that our taxonomy is strictly dependent on the unconscious taxonomy in use during that period.

What is emerging from the analysis can be summarized as a complex interplay of different factors influencing the location of the single text in the ideological grid. Using the Saussurian terminology as a metaphor, we might say that the single *parole* is located at the intersection of the available *langues*. There is a 'national' factor, one of cultural tradition (roughly defined in geographical terms). There is also a factor of political history, basically a diachronic factor, but also one of political status. And

there is a typological factor related to the kind of text, but more deeply dependent on the audience at which it is directed and the reason for issuing it.

Other things being equal, these factors should be evaluated separately in order to understand the relevance of each; all of the differences should not be attributed a priori to one factor alone. However, this kind of 'laboratory' analysis is hardly possible because the single text is generally so complex in itself that a dissection into simple factors risks being arbitrary. Or perhaps this is only a question of the historians' habit of not engaging in a 'scientific' kind of analytical dissection? This habit is certainly connected with the concern for keeping an overall appreciation of the single document in all its complex nuances. Yet the moment of the analysis should be considered preliminary and necessary in order to reach objectivity in the eventual overall historical appreciation.

The national/cultural factor is very strong, and it is the factor best known and most appreciated by scholars in the respective fields, accustomed to dealing only with their own material, perceiving it as unique and the others as 'different'. This factor is especially strong in contrasting the Egyptian with the Asiatic data, and this fact cannot be challenged. Yet, inside the Asiatic world, the differences are also important. Leaving aside the less well known Kassite and Mitannian ideologies (that I would characterize as indecisive/defensive and as heroic/fancy, respectively), Assyrian and Hittite political attitudes are quite different. Assyria adopts a centralized ideology and provides the best parallels to the Egyptian material, while Hittite acceptance and use of symmetry is more deeply embedded in its political theory and praxis. The imperialistic destiny of Assyria is quite clear in the middle-Assyrian period, notwithstanding its insertion in a pluralistic world. Is it only for specific historical reasons that Assyria will resist the crisis of the twelfth century, while Hatti will be submerged and swept away? The political super-realism of Hatti was an excellent device for facing normal problems, but the ideological determination of Assyria proved more useful in navigating major difficulties.

The influence of the specific political relationships determined by time is also important, but not decisive. From the structural point of view, there is a general stability through time. The rise of Assyria or the collapse of Mitanni are major events but not structural features. Egypt undergoes some fluctuations. There is a greater disposition to symmetry at the beginning (with the Hyksos still in the Delta), and then a systematization of the centralized attitude under the Tuthmosids. This is followed, under the Ramessides, by a sharp division between an underscoring of centrality

in celebrative monuments and the acceptance of symmetry in political activities. The trajectory concludes with a major and sudden increase of centrality on the very eve (and under the pressure) of imperialistic collapse. A comparison of marriages and battles in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries is sufficient to demonstrate how Egyptian centrality was affected by the surrounding pluralistic world. Assyrian centrality grows suddenly after the attainment of the rank of great kingdom and eventually compounds itself, while the Hittite use of symmetry is successful in the face of growing threats. We cannot build any system on too few elements, but the impression is that prolonged interaction brought about a generalization of symmetry but also a proliferation of centralities.

The typological factor is the essential one. A neat contrast exists between what is said to the inner public and what is said to the outer partner. An Egyptian royal inscription views the events more or less differently from an Assyrian royal inscription, but certainly in a quite different way from an Egyptian letter sent to Assyria. And an Assyrian letter to Hatti is certainly quite different from an Assyrian royal inscription, and almost identical to a Hittite letter to Assyria – all other things being equal, that is, when dealing with the same historical event. The differences in the various types of texts are to be ascribed to the basic differences in audience and aim. The contrast of inner and outer audience is coterminous with the contrast of celebrative vs. interactive purpose, and with a search for prestige vs. interest. This is the leitmotif of the book, and I think the point has been proven beyond any possible doubt. Now this point, however obvious, is generally neglected in historical analyses. We readily accept that the same event (a battle, a marriage, an exchange of goods) involving two different kingdoms will be narrated differently by them; but we are inclined to overlook the fact that the same event will be differently narrated by the same partner in different contexts. This factor is so influential that we must also take it into account when no comparison with different sources is available. The purpose of the textual recording is in itself a factor of distortion that must be rectified in order to proceed to a historical use of the source. The code must be identified if we want to understand the message. Political texts never record facts for the sake of recording, but for the sake of political action.

Ideology and praxis

A triangular pattern can be established between event, ideology and account, quite similar to the semiological pattern of object (or referent),

concept (or reference) and symbol (or representation). The influence of ideology on the account is quite obvious, as is the influence of the concept on the symbolic representation of a reality that is understood through the concept itself. The most simple object – a pebble, a stick – can be differently viewed, described and labelled according to a society's conceptual codes – according, for instance, to colour, shape and size orderings, to normal use, and to possible symbolic allusions. In the meantime, the physical existence of the pebble or the stick remains 'objectively' unaffected by the way they are viewed. Not so, however, for historical events, where ideology exerts itself in both directions: on the account *and* on the event.

The influence of ideology on the account is quite evident and well known. A large part of this book has also been devoted to this kind of influence, in the conviction that too often we still forget that words represent concepts and not things, and 'historical' accounts reproduce mental representations of what happened. We could extend the neo-geographical concept of 'mental maps' to the field of history. Our texts describe 'mental battles', 'mental marriages', 'mental borders', 'mental exchanges of goods', representations of these events in the minds of the actors – two actors embedded in different cultures and using different ideological codes to view the same event differently. Since we do not 'possess' the event, the historical account first of all allows us to reconstruct the ideological codes, the mental representations of what happened; perhaps this is all that it allows us to do.

But the reality itself (the 'referent') is not a physical one, it is a social reality, it is the way people act in the political situation. This behaviour is also influenced by ideology, because ideology establishes how people should act, before establishing how their actions should be perceived and related. Models of behaviour determine what an event should be, and consequently affect to a large extent how it took place. The narrative of a battle is a cultural product, but the order and tactics of the battle itself are also cultural products, modelled according to the ideal values of the time. The battle is enacted according to the ideological model, and then narrated according to the same model. There is a model for usurping a throne, and there is a model-apology to be written by the usurper. A masterpiece of battle or usurpation is one that actually took place according to the model, so that its cultural perception is 'easy', and its narrative will be easily structured according to the model-plot. When cultural models are not respected in action, the narrative can make up for this by supplying the missing cultural values. In this case 'ideology' becomes 'propaganda'. Throughout the book the word 'ideology' has

been used in its broader sense, as the complex of mental values (as opposed to the physical reality), while 'propaganda' is the deliberate manipulation of reality to render it consistent with ideology.

The deepening of our consciousness of the burden of ideology on historical events should result in a new reading of political history itself. As a result, it might be expected that a book of this sort would conclude by showing precisely how the political events of the time should be reconstructed. This would require a lengthy discussion that cannot find its place here. Nevertheless, I am convinced that this book has produced two important results. Explicitly, it has provided an outline of the political ideologies of the time; implicitly, it has established the need for a systematic reassessment of its political history.

More generally, this is also a plea for a different appreciation of political history. The writing of economic and social history has for long proceeded on the assumption that single events cannot be properly understood without a reconstruction of the general structures underlying them. Political history, on the other hand, has been left as a domain free for the *histoire événementielle*, as an unstructured sequence of 'facts' that cannot be reduced to any system. Yet battles and treaties have their structures too, and the proper understanding of single political events can no more do without the establishment of a grid of reference and a methodology of analysis than the discrete phenomena of the economic and social worlds.

Chronologies

The great kingdoms

	EGYPT	HATTI	MITANNI	ASSYRIA	BABYLONIA
1600	Apophis & Kamose ca. 1590	Hantili I			KASSITE DYNASTY
	Amosis 1575-1550	Zidanta I Ammuna	Kirta (?) Shuttarna I (?)		"
	Amenophis I 1550-1528	Huzziya I	"		"
	Tuthmosis I 1528-1510	Telipinu	"		Agum II
	Tuthmosis II 1510-1490	Tahurwadi	"		Burna-Buriash I Kashtiliash III
1500	Hatshepsut 1490-1468	Alluwamma	Barattarna		Ulam-Buriash
	Tuthmosis III 1468-1436	Hantili II Zidanta II Huzziya II	Parsashatar	Enlil-nasir II 1430-1425	Agum III
	Amenophis II 1436-1413	Tudhaliya I	Shaushatar	Ashur-nirari II 1424-1418	Karaindash
	Tuthmosis IV 1413-1405	Hattushili II "	Artatama I	Ashur-bel-nisheshu 1417-1409 Ashur-rim-nisheshu 1408-1401	Kadashman-Harbe I
1400	Amenophis III 1405-1367	"	Shuttarna II	Ashur-nadin-ahhe II 1400-1391	Kurigalzu I
	Amenophis IV 1367-1350	Shuppiluliuma I ca. 1370-1342	Tushratta Artatama II Shuttarna III	Eriba-Adad I 1390-1364	Kadashman-Enlil I 1374-1360
	Tutanhamun, Ay 1350-1335	Arnuwanda II ca. 1342-1340	Shattiwaza "	Ashur-uballit I 1363-1328	Burna-Buriash II 1359-1333
	Horemheb 1335-1308	Mursili II ca. 1340-1310	"	Enlil-nirari 1327-1318	Kurigalzu II 1332-1308
	Ramesses I 1308-1307			Arik-den-ili 1317-1306	
	Sethos I	Muwatali	Shattuara I		
1300	1307-1291	ca. 1310-1280	Wasashatta	Adad-nirari I 1305-1274	Nazi-Marutash 1307-1282
	Ramesses II 1290-1224	Urhi-Teshub ca. 1280-1275 Hattushili III ca. 1275-1260	Shattuara II	Shalmaneser I 1273-1244	Kadashman-Turgu 1281-1264 Kadashman-Enlil 1263-1255
	Merneptah 1224-1214	Tudhaliya IV ca. 1260-1220		Tukulti-Ninurta I 1243-1207	"
	Sethos II and others	Arnuwanda III ca. 1220-1200		Ashur-nadin-apli 1206-1203	Kashtiliash IV 1232-1225 "
1200	1214-1182			Ashur-nirari III 1202-1197	"
	Ramesses III 1182-1151	Shuppiluliuma II ca. 1200-1170		Enlil-kudur-usur 1196-1192	"
	Ramesses IV-XI 1151-1087			"	II ISIN DYNASTY 1157-1026
				Ashur-resh-ishi I 1132-1115 Tiglath-pileser I 1114-1076	
1100					

Northern Syria and Anatolia in the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries

	HATTI	KIZZUWATNA	ALALAH	MITANNI
1550	Telipinu ← → Ishputahshu			
1500	Taburwaili ← → Ebeya			
	Alhuwamma	Paddatishu		
	Hantili II			
	Zidanta II ← → Pilliya ← → Idrimi ← → Barattarna Parsashatar			
1450	Tudhaliya I	Shunashura ← → Niqmepa ← → Shaushatar		
1400	Hattushili II		Ilim-ilimma II	Artatama I

← → Attested synchronisms.

Northern Syria: fourteenth–twelfth centuries

	KARKEMISH	ALEPPO	UGARIT	AMURRU
1400			Ammistamru I ... - ca. 1370	Abdi-Ashirta ca. 1400-1370
			Niqmadu II	Aziru
1350	Piyashili (= Sharru-Kushuh) ca. 1345-1335	Telipinu ca. 1345-1330	ca. 1370-1335 Ar-Halba ca. 1335-1330	ca. 1370-1335 Ari-Teshub ca. 1335-1330
	Shahurunuwa (= / and XX-Sharruma) ca. 1335-1270	Talmi-Sharruma ca. 1330-...		Duppi-Teshub ca. 1330-1300
1300			Niqmepa ca. 1330-1270	Benteshina ca. 1300-1285 1275-1250
	Ini-Teshub I ca. 1270-1220	Halpaziti ca. 1250	Ammistamru II ca. 1270-1230	Shapili ca. 1285-1275
1250			Ibiranu ca. 1230-1210	Shausgamuwa ca. 1250-1220
	Talmi-Teshub ca. 1220-1190		Niqmadu III ca. 1210-1200	"
1200			Ammurapi ca. 1200-1170	"
	Kuzi-Teshub ca. 1190-...			"
1150	"			
	Ini-Teshub II ca. 1100			
1100				

Notes

Introduction

1. Cf., for example, A. B. Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International Society* (New Brunswick and London, 1994).
2. The question is explicitly or implicitly present in most contributions to R. Cohen and R. Westbrook (eds), *Amarna Diplomacy* (Baltimore and London, 2000).
3. W. L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore and London, 1992); M. Liverani, *Le lettere di el-Amarna*, I–II (Brescia, 1998–9).
4. E. Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites* (Paris, 1971).
5. P. Bordreuil and D. Pardee, *La trouvaille épigraphique de l'Ougarit* (Paris, 1989).
6. J. M. Durand, *Documents épistolaires du palais de Mari*, I–III (Paris, 1997–2000).
7. A. Archi (and others), *Archivi Reali di Ebla*, I–XI (Rome, 1985–93).
8. Quite recently, the volume on *Amarna Diplomacy* (quoted above) has the subtitle *The Beginnings of International Relations*.
9. G. R. Berridge in *Amarna Diplomacy*, pp. 212–24.
10. Cf. M. Rowlands, M. Larsen and K. Kristiansen (eds), *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 66–73.
11. On trade and merchants in the Late Bronze period cf. J. D. Muhly, C. Zaccagnini, G. Kestemont and M. Heltzer in *Iraq*, 39 (1977), pp. 73–82, 171–89, 191–201, 203–11.
12. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma*; E. Hornung, *Untersuchungen zur Chronologie und Geschichte des Neuen Reiches* (Wiesbaden, 1964); D. B. Redford, *History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt* (Toronto, 1967); C. Kühne, *Die Chronologie der internationalen Korrespondenz von El-Amarna* (Neukirchen, 1973); R. Krauss, *Das Ende der Amarnazeit* (Hildesheim, 1978); P. Aström (ed.), *High, Middle or Low?*, I–II (Gothenburg, 1987).
13. V. Korošec, *International Relations According to Cuneiform Reports from Tall al-Amarna and Hittite State Archives* (Ljubljana, 1950) still remains the more general work; G. Kestemont, *Diplomatique et droit international en Asie Occidentale (1600–1200 av. J. C.)* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1974) is very detailed yet difficult to use in a historical perspective (see below).
14. Apart from Egypt and Hatti (whose 'New Kingdoms' are a large part in any general treatment of those regions), some major monographs are to be mentioned here. For Babylonia: J. A. Brinkman, *Materials and Studies for Kassite History*, I (Chicago, 1976). For Upper Mesopotamia: Harrak, *Hanigalbat*. For Syria: H. Klengel, *Geschichte Syriens im 2. Jahrtausend v.u.Z.*, I–III (Berlin, 1965–70); M. Liverani (ed.), *La Siria nel tardo bronzo* (Rome, 1969).
15. Helck, *Beziehungen*; R. Giveon, *The Impact of Egypt on Canaan* (Göttingen, 1978); D. B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton, NJ, 1992).
16. The Syro-Palestinian history of the Late Bronze period is treated in chapters by W. F. Albright (II.xx; II.xxxiii), M. S. Drower (II.x.1–2; II.xxi b), A. Goetze (II.xvii; II.xxiv), K. Kenyon (II.xi), H. J. Franken (II.xxvi b), O. Eissfeldt (II.xxvi

- a), R. D. Barnett (II.xxviii) – with no coherent layout, and mostly with reference to outer areas.
17. For a summary of Polanyi's theories cf. G. Dalton in *Ancient Civilization and Trade* (Albuquerque, NM, 1975), pp. 63–132. On Polanyi's impact on historical studies, cf. S. Humphreys in *History and Theory*, 8 (1969), pp. 165–212; Y. Garlan in *La Pensée*, 171 (1973), pp. 118–28; L. Valensi in *Annales ESC*, 29 (1974), pp. 1311–19. Among Orientalists, Polanyi's work was heavily criticized, partly because the philological approach prevailing in ancient Near East studies left few opportunities for overall interpretive attempts, and partly because, when dealing specifically with the ancient Near East, he chose inappropriate examples and revealed all his philological and historical weaknesses (cf. K. R. Veenhof, *Aspects of Old Assyrian Trade and its Terminology* (Leiden, 1972), pp. 348–57; W. Röllig in *WO*, 8/2 (1976), pp. 286–95; M. A. Powell in *Oikumene*, 2 (1978), pp. 127–44; M. Silver in *Journal of Economic History*, 43 (1983), pp. 795–829; J. Gledhill and M. T. Larsen in *Theory and Explanation in Archaeology* (New York, 1982), pp. 197–229). More recently, Polanyi's theories have been satisfactorily employed in the reconstruction of economic systems in the ancient Near East by scholars of properly Orientalistic training (e.g. J. J. Janssen, *Commodity Prices from the Ramesside Period* (Leiden, 1975), pp. 558–62; *SAK*, 3 (1975), pp. 127–85; *GM*, 48 (1981), pp. 59–77; J. Renger in *Circulation of Goods in Non-Palatial Context in the Ancient Near East* (Rome, 1984), pp. 31–47 – not to speak, of course, of C. Zaccagnini, *Scambio* and *JNES*, 42 (1983), pp. 245–64; and myself in *MANE*, 1/5 (1979) pp. 21–33), even though I suspect that the common reaction has not been particularly enthusiastic.
 18. K. Polanyi in *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* (Glencoe, IL, 1957), p. 250.
 19. This risk is an actual one with Polanyi's third pattern, the 'market', which tends to be identified as our pattern, consequently pushing back the two other toward a 'primitive' or 'simplistic' system.
 20. This is the meaning of both Sumerian *é-gal* and Egyptian *pr* 'l.
 21. For the relevance of the 'household' in ancient Near Eastern economies cf. I. J. Gelb in *JAOS*, 87 (1967), pp. 1–8; also the special issue of *Oikumene*, 5 (1986), pp. 9–53 (articles by M. A. Powell, W. F. Leemans, H. Klengel, N. B. Jankowska, J. Zablocka, M. A. Dandamayev).
 22. Cf. Dalton in *Ancient Civilizations and Trade*, pp. 91–3.
 23. Cf. M. D. Sahlins in *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology* (London, 1966), p. 144 and *passim*.
 24. A. Emmanuel, *L'échange inégal* (Paris, 1972); A. G. Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (New York, 1967); S. Amin, *Impérialisme et sous-développement en Afrique* (Paris, 1976); and more works in the same vein. In particular, C. Meillassoux, *Femmes, greniers et capitaux* (Paris, 1975), p. 104 denounces the application of the concept of reciprocity to exploitation relationships.
 25. N. J. Smelser in *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 8/2 (1959), pp. 173–82 suggested to differentiate from real redistribution a separate pattern of 'mobilization' (p. 179), where only centripetal contributions take place.
 26. Sahlins, *The Relevance of Models*, p. 163.
 27. C. Lévi-Strauss in *Bijdragen tot de Tal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 62/112 (1956), pp. 99–128, republished in his *Anthropologie structurale* (Paris, 1958).

28. In the early 1970s, our attempt to decode the messages of the ancient royal inscriptions was influenced by studies in 'counter-information' as applied to the modern mass media. In particular, I want to pay my debt to R. Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris, 1957), and to such Italian works as U. Eco, *Il costume di casa* (Milan, 1969). Among Orientalists, the critical decoding of the political 'discourse' culminated in the provocative booklet by J. Chesneaux, *Du passé faisons table-rase?* (Paris, 1976).
29. In recent years, P. James, *Centuries of Darkness* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1993) and H. Gasche et al., *Dating the Fall of Babylon* (Ghent 1998) tried to eliminate the 'dark ages' by shortening the chronology. But the 'dark ages' do exist, and materialize the problematic nature of continuity both in source availability and in historical development which is quite characteristic of pre-modern times.
30. P. Garelli in *Akkadica*, 27 (1982), pp. 16–29; W. Mayer, *Politik und Kriegskunst der Assyrier* (Münster, 1995), pp. 5–6. By now, 'propaganda' has become a common term in ancient Near Eastern studies, cf. e.g. J. J. Finkelstein and A. L. Oppenheim in *Propaganda and Communication in World History*, 1 (Honolulu, HI, 1979), pp. 50–110, 111–44; many more studies will be quoted in the course of this book.

Chapter 1 Inner vs. Outer Territory

1. P. Janni in *AION*, 33 (1973), pp. 445–500; 35 (1975), pp. 145–78.
2. The classical works are L. Lévy-Bruhl, *La mentalité primitive* (Paris, 1922); E. Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. II: Das mythische Denken* (Oxford, 1923).
3. H. Frankfort, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Chicago, 1946). Cf. now P. Machinist in S. N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (New York, 1986), pp. 195–200.
4. The turning point was provided by C. Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage* (Paris, 1962).
5. The pages by M. Eliade on the cyclical structure of time (*Le mythe de l'éternel retour* (Paris, 1949)), or on the cosmic vs. chaotic character of inner vs. outer space (*Le sacré et le profane* (Paris, 1965)) are still helpful.
6. Egypt: H. Brunner in *Studium Generale* 10 (1957), pp. 612–20; J. Leclant in *Revue de Synthèse*, 55–6 (1969), pp. 217–39; Mesopotamia: E. Cassin, *ibid.*, pp. 241–57.
7. H. Limet in *RA*, 72 (1978), pp. 1–12; G. Steiner in H. J. Nissen and J. Renger (eds), *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn* (Berlin, 1982), pp. 633–64.
8. E. Hornung in *MDIK*, 15 (1957), pp. 122–3; *LA*, I (1975), pp. 76–8.
9. Cf. Hebrew 'am '(our) people' vs. *goyim* '(foreign) peoples': E. A. Speiser in *JBL*, 79 (1960), pp. 157–63; *TWAT*, I, pp. 965–73; *THAT*, II, pp. 290–325; R. McC. Good, *The Sheep of His Pasture* (Chico, CA, 1980).
10. G. Buccellati, *Cities and Nations of Ancient Syria* (Rome, 1967); E. Palti in *Abr-Nahrain*, 19 (1981), pp. 43–61.
11. R. McC. Adams in Ch. Moore (ed.), *Reconstructing Complex Societies* (Cambridge, MA, 1974), pp. 1–20.
12. Cf. M. Rowton in *Studies B. Landsberger* (Chicago, IL, 1965), pp. 375–87.

13. A. Haldar, *The Notion of the Desert in Sumero-Accadian and West-Semitic Religion* (Uppsala-Leipzig, 1950); S. Talmon in *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East* (London, 1987), pp. 117–42; N. Wyatt in *UF*, 19 (1987), pp. 375–89.
14. Cf. G. Buccellati, *The Amorites of the Ur III Period* (Napoli, 1966), pp. 89–95; J. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore, MD, 1983), pp. 30–3.
15. V. Condon, *Seven Royal Hymns of the Ramesside Period* (Berlin, 1978), p. 21.
16. *AEL*, II, p. 144.
17. *LEM*, p. 13.
18. On *rmt* 'Egyptian' and 'man' cf. M. Defossez in *GM*, 85 (1985), pp. 25–7.
19. S. Sauneron in *BIFAO*, 60 (1960), p. 41; S. Donadoni in *VO*, 3 (1980), pp. 1–14.
20. Liverani in *VO*, 3 (1980), pp. 15–31. On animal languages W. G. Lambert in *AnSt*, 20 (1970), pp. 111–17; on *mithurtu* W. von Soden, *Zweisprachigkeit in der geistigen Kultur Babylonien* (Vienna, 1961).
21. Sh. Izreel, *The Amarna Scholarly Tablets* (Groningen, 1997), pp. 37–81.
22. *RIA*, 5 (1976–80), pp. 124–8.
23. I. J. Gelb in *Glossa*, 2 (1968), pp. 93–104.
24. D. B. Redford in *JSSEA*, 10 (1979), pp. 68–9.
25. *AEL*, II, p. 98. Cf. S. Sauneron in *BIFAO*, 51 (1952), pp. 41–8.
26. H. Schäfer in *MDIK*, 12 (1943), pp. 73–95; H. Goedicke in *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, I (Cairo, 1985), pp. 307–24.
27. A. Schlott-Schwab, *Die Ausmasse Ägyptens nach altägyptischen Texten* (Wiesbaden, 1981).
28. A. H. Gardiner, *The Wilbour Papyrus*, II–III (Oxford, 1948).
29. E. Uphill in *JEOL*, 19 (1965–66), pp. 393–420; J. Vercoutter in *BIFAO*, 48 (1949), pp. 108–28, 189–202; *LA*, I (1975), pp. 841–5; IV (1982), pp. 472–3; D. Valbelle, *Les neuf arcs* (Paris, 1990).
30. On the itinerary as the technical tool for peoples lacking geographical maps cf. P. Janni, *La mappa e il periplo* (Rome, 1984), pp. 31–2 and *passim*. On the period here considered cf. W. Röllig in *DaM*, 1 (1983), pp. 279–84; A. H. Gardiner in *JEA*, 6 (1920), pp. 99–116; H. Limet in *Transeuphratène* 8 (1994), pp. 95–107.
31. D. B. Redford in *JSSEA*, 12 (1982), pp. 55–74.
32. *ANET*, pp. 475–9.
33. *ANET*, pp. 477–8.
34. E. von Schuler, *Hethitische Dienstanweisungen für höhere Hof- und Staatsbeamte* (Graz, 1957), pp. 41–52; A. Goetze in *JCS*, 14 (1960), pp. 69–73. On the Kashkean threat, the Hittite 'limes' and the 'pacification' (= submission) policy, cf. E. von Schuler, *Die Kaškäer* (Berlin, 1965), esp. pp. 61–5; M. Marazzi in *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica*, 29 (1988), pp. 138–45.
35. Gates: H. Otten in *BaM*, 3 (1964), pp. 91–5; I. Singer in J. Westenholz (ed.), *Capital Cities* (Jerusalem, 1998), pp. 169–76.
36. Cf. E. Laroche in *RHA*, 67 (1960), pp. 81–6. On the Kashkean frontier J. M. González Salazar in *AuOr*, 12 (1994), pp. 109–76; T. R. Bryce in *Tel Aviv*, 13–14 (1986), pp. 85–102.
37. *ANET*, p. 211.
38. Hittite 'ethnology': von Schuler, *Kaškäer*, pp. 1–10, 76–7.
39. *HDT*, pp. 27–8; comments by von Schuler, *Kaškäer*, pp. 6–7; Pintore, *Matrimonio*, pp. 72–3; O. Carruba in *Festschrift H. Otten* (Wiesbaden, 1988), pp. 59–75.

Chapter 2 Universal Control

1. W. Hallo, *Early Mesopotamian Royal Titles* (New Haven, CT, 1957), pp. 21–6; M. J. Seux in *RA*, 59 (1965), pp. 1–18.
2. *ERAS*, pp. 308–12.
3. H. Gonnet in *Hethitica*, 3 (1979), pp. 24–5.
4. *ERAS*, pp. 56 and 313; cf. Oded, *War*, pp. 163–76.
5. Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 14–15, similar epithets on pp. 81–2, 38–9, 84–6, 32–3.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–1, 29–30; Hornung in *MDIK*, 15 (1952), pp. 122–3.
7. S. Donadoni in *Studi Classici e Orientali*, 10 (1961), pp. 97–101; E. Otto in *Studia Aegyptiaca*, I (Rome, 1938), pp. 10–35.
8. Hallo, *Titles*, pp. 77–78; *ERAS*, pp. 302–3.
9. On the fundamental ‘Hemisphären-Schema’ and its complications cf. J. Osing in *JEA*, 68 (1982), pp. 77–80.
10. Tukulti-Ninurta I (*ERAS*, p. 320), cf. below.
11. *ERAS*, p. 304; *EAK*, I, p. 85.
12. Hebrew: P. Boccaccio in *Biblia*, 33 (1952), pp. 173–90. Egyptian: A. Massart, in *Mélanges A. Robert* (Paris, 1957), pp. 38–46.
13. L. A. Christophe in *RÉ*, 6 (1952), pp. 89–114; G. Posener in *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*, Phil.-hist. Klasse, 1965, n. 2, pp. 69–78; *LA*, II (1977), pp. 1213–15.
14. The title ‘lord of the five parts’ (Tuthmosis III) refers to the four points of the compass plus the centre (Posener, *Nachrichten*, p. 74; Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 14, 45 note 24).
15. Hallo, *Titles*, pp. 49–56; Seux in *RA*, 59 (1965), pp. 1–18; T. Maeda in *Orient*, 20 (1984), pp. 67–82; Glassner in *Akkadica*, 40 (1984), pp. 17–34. On the middle Assyrian and middle Babylonian periods cf. *ERAS*, pp. 305–8.
16. *ARE*, II, p. 321 (Hatshepsut) is just one example.
17. J. Simons, *Handbook for the Study of Egyptian Topographical Lists* (Leiden, 1937); Sh. Ahituv, *Canaanite Toponyms in Ancient Egyptian Documents* (Jerusalem, 1984).
18. Cf. my contraposition of ‘open listing’ and ‘opposite elements’ in *L'alba della civiltà*, III (Torin, 1976), pp. 499–513.
19. On titles as the programme of a reign, cf. Hornung in *MDIK*, 15 (1957), pp. 120–33; *Saeculum*, 22 (1971), pp. 48–58. On the terminology of the Egyptian titulary cf. M. A. Bonhème in *BIFAO*, 78 (1978), pp. 347–87.
20. For a later period cf. my paper in *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (Rome, 1981), pp. 225–57.
21. *RIMA*, I, p. 245. On Tukulti-Ninurta cf. H. Klengel in *Das Altertum*, 7 (1961), pp. 67–77; Harrak, *Hanigalbat*, pp. 206–77.
22. A similar reconstruction in H. Galter in *JCS*, 40 (1988), pp. 217–35.
23. E. Weidner, *Die Inschriften Tukulti-Ninurta I.* (Graz, 1959), p. 26; J. M. Munn-Rankin, *Assyrian Military Power 1300–1200 B.C.* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 20.
24. *EAK*, I, pp. 82–3.

Chapter 3 The Boundaries of the World

1. E. Hornung in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 49 (1980), pp. 393–427.

2. The horizon is not even a line, but a large land, inhabited by men and gods, cf. Ch. Kuentz in *BIFAO*, 17 (1920), pp. 140–73.
3. *ARE*, II, 98.
4. *ARE*, II, 225; cf. II, 285, II, 319, etc.
5. S. Tawfik in *MDIK*, 29 (1973), pp. 79–81; cf. Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 13, 16, 18, 30, 32–3, 127. Also the expression ‘as far as what the sun illuminates’ is usual (cf. *ARE*, II, 1006; *ARE*, III, 144; etc.).
6. *CAD*, S, pp. 216–17 (1c).
7. *AEL*, II, p. 36.
8. *KRIT*, I, 1.
9. *EHR*, I, p. 39.
10. J. Elayi in *OA*, 23 (1984), pp. 75–92.
11. W. Heimpel in *ZA*, 77 (1987), pp. 22–91.
12. H. Klengel in *Ägypten und Kusch* (Berlin, 1977), pp. 227–32.
13. Cf. *ET*, pp. 12–13; 16–17; *AU*, pp. 237–40.
14. O. Kaiser, *Die mytische Bedeutung des Meeres im Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel* (Berlin, 1962); L. Stadelman, *The Hebrew Conception of the World* (Rome, 1970), pp. 154–64; N. Wyatt in *UF*, 19 (1987), pp. 375–89.
15. Biblical borders: M. Saebo in *ZDPV*, 90 (1974), pp. 14–37; *TWAT*, I, pp. 896–901; R. S. Hess in *Ugarit and the Bible* (Münster, 1996), pp. 123–38. On the Brook of Egypt N. Na’aman in *Tel Aviv*, 7 (1980), pp. 95–109; also *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 246–9.
16. Cf. G. Posener, *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*, Phil.-hist. Klasse, 1965, pp. 70 and 75 with note 10 (‘Pour les égyptiens, le Nord est acquatique’). Cf. Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 85–6. Also in Babylonia, the periphery of cosmos is either darkness or water, cf. W. Hurowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake, IN, 1998), pp. 32–5.
17. Hintze in *ZÄS*, 87 (1962), p. 39.
18. *KRIT*, II, 27 (Ramesses II).
19. K. Sethe in *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, 1928), pp. 259–84; Grapow, *Ausdrücke*, p. 44; Posener, *Nachrichten*, p. 75; E. Hornung, *Nacht und Finsternis im Weltbild der alten Ägypter* (diss. Tübingen, 1956).
20. H. Grapow in *ZÄS*, 67 (1931), pp. 34–8; H. Brunner in *AfO*, 17 (1954–56), pp. 141–5; E. Hornung in *ZÄS*, 81 (1956), pp. 28–32.
21. Compare the Roman *propagatio* (moving forward) of borders, in G. Piccaluga, *Terminus* (Rome, 1974), pp. 111–12 and 115, with the contrasted stability for internal borders (cf. below, Chapter 6).
22. *ERAS*, p. 239.
23. D. B. Redford in *Papyrus and Tablet* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1973), pp. 15–30.
24. *ARE*, II, 39, 80.
25. K.F. Müller, *Das assyrische Ritual*, I (Leipzig, 1937), pp. 12–13.
26. Hintze in *ZÄS*, 87 (1962), p. 35. Examples are easily found from Amenophis II (*ARE*, II, 796, 797), Amenophis III (Lorton, *Terminology*, p. 98), to Sethos I (*ARE*, III, 84), Ramesses II (*ARE*, III, 476), Ramesses III (*HRR*, pp. 21, 70, 73, 85).
27. *ERAS*, pp. 117–19, 313–14.
28. *ERAS*, p. 264.
29. *EHR*, I, p. 26; Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 19–20, 33–5.
30. Helck, *Beziehungen*, p. 165.

31. Y. Kaufman, *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1953); Z. Kallai in *Erls*, 12 (1975), pp. 27–34.1

Chapter 4 Symbolic Attainment of the World Border

1. On the Akkadian stela (*narû*: CAD, N/1, pp. 364–67; *šalmu*: CAD, Š pp. 78–85) cf. E. D. van Buren in *Or*, 19 (1941), pp. 65–92; D. Morandi in *Mesopotamia* 23 (1988), pp. 105–55. On Egyptian *tw* cf. W. Barta in *Festschrift der Berliner ägyptischen Museums* (Berlin, 1974), pp. 51–4; Grimal, *Propagande*, pp. 137–42; J. N. Galán, *Victory and Border* (Hildesheim, 1995), pp. 136–55.
2. *ARE*, II, 478, 481.
3. *EHR*, I, p. 3. Also Tuthmosis' soldiers mention the crossing of the Euphrates in their funerary inscriptions (*EHR*, II, pp. 88, 158).
4. *EHR*, I, pp. 8–9.
5. *EHR*, II, p. 144 (Amenophis II). Also *ARE*, II, 862 (Amenophis III); 818 (Tuthmosis IV); 631 (Mitanni instead of Naharina); 871 (Kush instead of Karoy); etc.
6. *ANET*, p. 240 (Tuthmosis III), repeated by Sethos I (*ARE*, III, 118).
7. The main axis, the Nile, was ideally prolonged northwards following the road across Palestine and Syria to Mitanni: L. A. Christophe in *RE*, 6 (1951), pp. 89–114.
8. J. R. Kupper in *OA*, 10 (1971), pp. 91–106; A. Malamat in *Studies B. Landsberger* (Chicago, 1965), pp. 365–73.
9. J. Börker-Klähn in *UF*, 28 (1996), pp. 28–43.
10. Besides being a conspicuous location for stelae, high mountains are boundary-like features in their own right, because nothing else can be seen beyond them, because they are uninhabited, difficult to cross, lastly because they look like 'pillars' sustaining the sky. Cf R. J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, MA, 1972), pp. 57–9.
11. H. Winckler, *Das Vorgebirge am Nahr-el-Kelb und seine Denkmäler* (Leipzig, 1909); F. H. Weissbach, *Die Denkmäler und Inschriften an der Mündung des Nahr-el-Kelb* (Leipzig, 1922).
12. *HDT*, p. 89.
13. *HDT*, p. 138.
14. Cf. the Assyrian royal epithet 'who opens the mountain road' (*ERAS*, p. 224), and Egyptian statement 'who opens valleys that previous people did not know and previous kings did not see' (Hornung in *MDIK*, 15 (1957), p. 126).
15. The motif of the 'new road' opened by the king deserves a special analysis. On digging wells cf. the stelae of Sethos I and Ramesses II lastly discussed by K. A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant* (Warminster, 1982), pp. 31–6, 49–50. In Assyria cf. *ARI*, I, 271, 276, 324, 403.
16. In 'opening' the Punt road, Hatshepsut (*ARE*, II, 287) acknowledges the existence of previous traffic, but the activity of low-rank, unknown intermediaries is considered irrelevant (*ARE*, II, 268, 287).
17. On the expression *ḥmw(t) kmt* 'not knowing Egypt' cf. Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 121–4; Hintze in *ZÄS*, 87 (1962), p. 38. Lorton adopts a juridical perspective, which is particularly inappropriate.

18. ARE, II, 257.
19. Cf. Chapter 27. The motif is reused by Horemheb (ARE, III, 38) and by Sethos I (ARE, III, 107).

Chapter 5 The Coexistence of Different States

1. J. M. Munn-Rankin in *Iraq*, 18 (1956), pp. 68–110; V. Korošec in *La civilisation de Mari* (Paris, 1967), pp. 139–50; C. Zaccagnini in *Studi F. Pintore* (Pavia, 1983), pp. 189–253; H. Limet in *Akkadica*, 43 (1985), pp. 6–15.
2. T. Säve-Söderberg in *Kush*, 4 (1956), pp. 54–61.
3. Habachi, *Kamose*, p. 48. On *nḥsj* ‘negro’ G. Posener in *ZÄS*, 83 (1958), pp. 38–43; K. Zibelius, *Afrikanische Orts- und Völkernamen* (Wiesbaden, 1972), pp. 140–2.
4. Habachi, *Kamose*, p. 32; Säve-Söderberg in *Kush*, 4 (1956), p. 54; Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 28–29, 61.
5. ERAS, pp. 298–300; P. Artzi and A. Malamat in *Studies W. W. Hallo* (Bethesda, MD, 1993), pp. 28–38.
6. PRU, IV, p. 41; cf. Chapter 29.
7. PRU, IV, p. 49.
8. EA, 76, 137.
9. EA, 104, 140.
10. AU, pp. 6–7; HDT, p. 129.
11. EA, 42; PRU, III, p. 6.
12. Cf. W. Brueggeman in *ZAW*, 84 (1972), pp. 1–18.
13. HDT, p. 128.
14. HDT, p. 101; cf. H. Klengel in *Studies Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate* (Leiden 1995), pp. 159–72.
15. A. K. Grayson in *UF*, 3 (1971), pp. 311–19; P. Artzi in *Bar-Ilan Studies in History* (Ramat Gan, 1978), pp. 25–41; Hararak, *Hanigalbat*, pp. 7–60.
16. EA, 9.
17. EA, 15; cf. Artzi, *Bar-Ilan Studies*, pp. 26–34.
18. EA, 16.
19. KH, 191; cf. H. Klengel in *AOF*, 18 (1991), pp. 236–8.
20. KH, 188.
21. HDT, p. 138; cf. Chapters 4 and 20.
22. KH, 188.
23. KH, 191.
24. HDT, pp. 40, 42. On ‘life/death’ in political terminology cf. J. Wijngaards in *VT*, 17 (1967), p. 233; and our Chapter 25.
25. The parity Hatti-Kizzuwatna treaties are edited by H. Otten in *JCS*, 5 (1951), pp. 129–32; MDOG, 103 (1971), pp. 59–68; G. Meyer in *MIOF*, 1 (1953), pp. 108–24.
26. OA, 12 (1973), pp. 267–97. Additional comments by A. Altman in *Bar-Ilan Studies in Assyriology* (Jerusalem, 1990), pp. 177–206.
27. HDT, pp. 88–9.
28. HDT, p. 113.
29. HDT, pp. 145–51. Cf. I. Hoffmann in *Or*, 53 (1984), pp. 34–59; J. Freu in *Hethitica*, 8 (1987), pp. 123–75; S. De Martino, *L’Anatolia occidentale nel medio regno ittita* (Florence, 1996), pp. 43–62.

30. I. Vincentelli in *RSO*, 46 (1971), pp. 146–8. On *kurewaneš* as ‘independent’ cf. *AU*, pp. 346–8; Heinhold-Krahmer, *Arzawa*, p. 94.
31. *EA*, 162.

Chapter 6 Moving Borders

1. *KRIT*, VI, p. 3.
2. *ET*, pp. 26–7.
3. *ABC*, pp. 159–61.
4. *CAD*, Z, pp. 76–84, 139–48.
5. *HDT*, p. 20; Goetze, *Kizzuwatna*, pp. 50–1; Liverani in *OA*, 12 (1973), pp. 267–97; R. H. Beal in *Or*, 55 (1986), pp. 424–45; G. Wilhelm in *Festschrift H. Otten* (Wiesbaden, 1988), pp. 359–70. On the topography of the border J. Börker-Klähn in *UF*, 28 (1996), pp. 44–66.
6. *CAD*, M/1, p. 7.
7. *PRU*, IV, p. 77; also p. 188.
8. *HDT*, p. 41; cf. M. Yamada in *Acta Sumerologica*, 16 (1994), pp. 261–68.
9. *HDT*, p. 40.
10. This holds true also in the centralist ideology, cf. Hornung in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 49 (1980), pp. 402–3 on the Amarna stelae.
11. Cf. the middle-Assyrian laws (B, §§ 8–9) or the middle-Assyrian documents forbidding the expansion of crops on roads or brooks functioning as boundaries (E. Ebeling, *Urkunden des Archivs von Assur* (Leipzig, 1933), pp. 68–9 and *passim*), or the Kassite *kudurrus* (border stelae) with clauses against their displacement (e.g. A. Ungnad in *AfO*, 1 (1923), pp. 19–23).
12. *HDT*, p. 159.
13. *HDT*, p. 161.
14. *HDT*, pp. 14–15.
15. *HDT*, pp. 99–100.
16. I. Singer in *Iraq*, 33 (1991), pp. 69–74.
17. *HDT*, pp. 39–40.
18. *KRIT*, II, 64.
19. *KRIT*, II, 64; translation by Spalinger in *SAK*, 9 (1981), pp. 319–20 (Egyptian version); the Akkadian version is virtually identical. Last edition by E. Edel, *Der Vertrag zwischen Ramses II. von Ägypten und Hattušili III. von Hatti* (Berlin, 1997).

Chapter 7 The Boundary as a Watershed for Taxation

1. *ARE*, I, 652, 657.
2. F. L. Griffith in *JEA*, 13 (1927), pp. 193–206; A.H. Gardiner in *JEA*, 38 (1952), pp. 24–33; W. F. Edgerton in *JNES*, 6 (1947), pp. 219–30.
3. *LEM*, pp. 108–9. On the Sile fortress, cf. G. Björkman in *JARCE*, 11 (1974), pp. 48–9.
4. *EA*, 30; cf. Chapter 10.
5. *EA*, 39–40; *PRU*, III, pp. 12–13, 15–16; *PRU*, IV, p. 193; *Ug.*, V, pp. 91–4.
6. *EA*, 255.
7. *HDT*, p. 21.
8. On the Old Testament border descriptions, after the classical works of A. Alt (*Kleine Schriften* (Munich, 1959) I, pp. 193–202; II, pp. 76–89, 276–88, 346–62),

- cf. esp. M. Noth in *ZDPV*, 58 (1935), pp. 185–202; J. Simons, *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament* (Leiden, 1959); N. Na'aman, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography* (Jerusalem, 1986).
9. *HDT*, pp. 31–2.
 10. *PRU*, IV, p. 78; M. Astour in *UF*, 11 (1979), pp. 22, 26.
 11. *PRU*, IV, pp. 74–5. Cf. *HDT*, p. 111.
 12. *HDT*, p. 42.
 13. *HDT*, p. 71; cf. S. De Martino, *L'Anatolia occidentale nel medio regno ittita* (Florence, 1996), pp. 27–30.
 14. *HDT*, p. 38.
 15. *PRU*, IV, p. 220.
 16. *AM*, pp. 98–9.
 17. *HDT*, p. 40.
 18. *ARI*, I, 862–4.
 19. *RIMA*, I, p. 272; cf. *RIMA*, I, p. 275.
 20. *HDT*, p. 56.
 21. *RIMA*, I, p. 236.

Chapter 8 The Boundary as a Watershed for Responsibilities

1. C. Srzednicki in *Folia Orientalia*, 11 (1969), pp. 255–8; R. Haase in *WO*, 9 (1978), pp. 213–19; H. Klengel in *Death in Mesopotamia* (Copenhagen, 1980), pp. 189–97.
2. *ANET*, p. 532.
3. *ANET*, p. 531; M. Dietrich and O. Loretz in *Studies M.C. Astour* (Bethesda, MD, 1997), pp. 211–42.
4. *PRU*, IV, pp. 153–4.
5. *JESHO*, 18 (1975), pp. 155–6.
6. *EA*, 7.
7. *EA*, 8.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *EA*, 34.
10. *EA*, 38.
11. *HDT*, p. 136.
12. *EA*, 38.
13. *HDT*, 136, p. 136; I follow *LM*, p. 144, with minor corrections.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *PRU*, IV, p. 217.
17. P. Bordreuil, *Une bibliothèque au sud de la ville* (Paris, 1991), p. 38.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Goedicke, *Wenamun*, p. 35, has a different interpretation; cf. also M. Green in *ZĀS*, 106 (1979), pp. 116–20; G. Bunnens in *RSF*, 6 (1978), pp. 13–14; A. Théodoridès in *Studia P. Naster Oblata*, II (Leuven, 1982), pp. 241–2.
20. Goedicke, *Wenamun*, p. 123.
21. R. B. Rovere in *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* (Glencoe, IL, 1957), pp. 38–68 is grossly exaggerated, yet contains interesting insights. Cf. also K. Polanyi in *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies* (Garden City, NY, 1968), pp. 238–260.

22. *HDT*, p. 134; *LM*, pp. 140–3 (translation mine).
23. *EA*, 185.
24. *PRU*, IV, p. 162.
25. On the story of the *ḥabiru* problem, cf. O. Loretz, *Habiru-Hebrär* (Berlin, 1984).
26. G. E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation* (Baltimore, MD, 1973), pp. 122–41; and my article in *VO*, 2 (1979), pp. 65–77, criticized by W. L. Moran in *Studies Th.O. Lambdin* (Winona Lake, IN, 1987), pp. 209–12.
27. *AU*, pp. 16–17. Cf. S. Heinhöhl-Krahmer in *Or*, 52 (1983), pp. 81–97; M. Popko in *AOF*, 11 (1984), pp. 199–203.
28. *EA*, 9. Cf. P. Artzi in *Michmanim*, 9 (1996), pp. 57–72.
29. *HDT*, p. 140, but my translation is somewhat different. On this passage cf. Goetze, *Kizzuwatna*, pp. 26–9; M. Rowton in *JCS*, 13 (1959), pp. 3–4.

Chapter 9 Runaways and Extradition

1. *HDT*, p. 15.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *HDT*, pp. 12–13.
4. *LEM*, p. 293.
5. *ANET*, p. 251.
6. Liverani in *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 77 (1965), pp. 315–36.
7. Korošec, *Staatsverträge*, pp. 80–1; Kestemont, *Diplomatique*, pp. 413–21. *PRU*, IV, pp. 107–8 is an exception.
8. *HDT*, pp. 145–51.
9. *HDT*, p. 66. Cf. also the norm ‘to send back is not correct’ (*HDT*, p. 41), and the opposite norm ‘to retain is not correct’ (*HDT*, p. 137).
10. *AU*, pp. 200–1: cf. H. Hoffner in *AfO Beiheft*, 19 (1982), pp. 130–7.
11. *HDT*, p. 66.
12. *KRIT*, II, 64; cf. Spalinger in *SAK*, 9 (1981), pp. 342–54; A. Théodoridès in *Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquité*, 22 (1975), pp. 133–8.
13. *AU*, pp. 12–13.
14. Cf. the Alalah treaties and the Ugaritic documents quoted above (Chapter 8); the Hittite laws (I, §§ 22–3) fix a reward proportional to the distance.
15. R. Stefanini in *Athenaeum*, 40 (1962), pp. 11–19. Arma is probably Horemhab. On Tette cf. T. R. Bryce in *AnSt*, 38 (1988), pp. 21–8.
16. M. Greenberg, *The Ḥab/piru* (New Haven, CT, 1955), n. 40.
17. *HDT*, p. 45.
18. *Ibid.*

Chapter 10 Messengers and ‘Ambassadors’

1. On the epistolary formulae cf. A. M. Bakir, *Egyptian Epistolography* (Cairo, 1970); E. Salonen, *Die Gruss- und Höflichkeitsformeln in babylonisch-assyrischen Briefen* (Helsinki, 1967); A. L. Kristensen in *UF*, 9 (1977), pp. 143–58; *KH*, I.
2. *HDT*, p. 20.
3. Liverani in *Studies W. L. Moran* (Atlanta, GA, 1990), pp. 337–48.

4. M. Valloggia, *Recherches sur les 'messagers' (wpwtyw) dans les sources égyptiennes* (Geneva, 1976).
5. *EA*, 161.
6. S. Lackenbacher in *RA*, 76 (1982), pp. 141–9.
7. *EA*, 1.
8. *EA*, 21.
9. *ANET*, p. 433; cf. the texts quoted in Chapter 1.
10. *EA*, 16 (Suteans); *HDT*, p. 134 (Ahlamu), quoted in Chapter 8.
11. *EA*, 30.
12. Habachi, *Kamose*, pp. 39–40; R. Stadelmann in *MDIK*, 20 (1968), pp. 62–9.
13. *BM*, I, pp. 214–15; cf. *HDT*, p. 134 on another case of Assyria cutting communications between Babylonia and Hatti.
14. Valloggia, *Recherches*, pp. 89, 93, 102.
15. *PRU*, III, pp. 165–6.
16. *EA* 3. On ancient Near Eastern hospitality cf. J.J. Glassner in *ZA*, 80 (1990), pp. 60–75, and in *Voyages et voyageurs au Proche-Orient ancien* (Leuven, 1994), pp. 77–90.
17. *EA*, 88.
18. *EA*, 16.
19. *EA*, 33.
20. *EA*, 29.
21. *EA*, 28.
22. *AEL*, II, p. 228.

Chapter 11 The One against Many

1. *BM*, I, pp. 231–2.
2. W. Röllig in *Saeculum*, 37 (1986), pp. 116–28.
3. Goetze, *Kizzuwatna*, pp. 21–2; Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma*, pp. 51–2; Heinhold-Krahmer, *Arzawa*, pp. 40 and 44–5.
4. *EA*, 91, 149, 283.
5. *AOF*, 1 (1974), pp. 179–84.
6. *EHR*, I, p. 2; *HRR*, p. 33.
7. Chariot: A. R. Schulman in *JSSEA*, 16 (1986), pp. 19–35, 39–49. Bow: O. Keel in *ZDPV*, 93 (1977), pp. 141–77; W. Decker, *Die physische Leistung Pharaos* (Cologne, 1971), pp. 80–122; P. D. Manuelian, *Studies on the Reign of Amenophis II* (Hildesheim, 1981), pp. 200–12.
8. On the term *hsj* (often translated as 'vile') cf. D. Lorton in *JARCE*, 10 (1973), pp. 65–70: literally 'weak', hence 'defeated'; I would better say 'foredoomed to defeat', 'inferior'.
9. R. Tefnin in *GM*, 47 (1981), pp. 55–76.
10. *KRIT*, II, 3. Translation by A. Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramesses II* (Oxford, 1960), p. 8.
11. Cf. von der Way, *Textüberlieferung*, pp. 386–98; A. Spalinger and H. Goedicke in *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh* (Baltimore, MD, 1985), pp. 1–42, 111–21. On the relationship between the failure on the battlefield and the celebrative 'Gigantomanie' cf. von der Way, pp. 379–83.

12. Text: *ÄHK*, 24, with Hattushili's ironic question '(Really) there was no army and no chariotry there?' Comments: G. Fecht in *GM*, 80 (1984), pp. 41–5, 51; Liverani in *Or*, 59 (1990), pp. 207–17.
13. Decker, *Leistung*, pp. 22–5, 26–7.
14. On 'confederation' and 'conspiracy' cf. B. Cifola in *Or*, 57 (1988), pp. 275–306.
15. *HRR*, pp. 7, 53.
16. But cf. Nelson in *JNES*, 2 (1943), pp. 40–55 on the confused and generic representation of the battle; Stadelmann in *Saeculum*, 19 (1968), pp. 164–6 on the topographic vagueness and contradictions.
17. B. Cifola in *Orientalis Antiqui Miscellanea*, 1 (1994), pp. 1–23.
18. *ARI*, I, 773 (40 kings); II, 30 (23 kings); and so on. On enemy coalitions and conspiracies in Assyrian texts cf. Oded, *War*, pp. 46–50.
19. *ERAS*, p. 259.
20. G. Posener in *RE*, 10 (1955), pp. 92–94.
21. H. G. Güterbock in *JCS*, 10 (1956), p. 67; cf. p. 65 'The Kashka assembled nine tribes'.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 75. Cf. H. A. Hoffner in *Studia P. Meriggi* (Pavia, 1979), pp. 261–6.
23. *AH*, pp. 10–11, 12–13.
24. *RIMA*, I, p. 184.
25. *EHR*, I, p. 31.
26. Güterbock in *JCS*, 10 (1956), p. 76.
27. *AION*, 22 (1972), pp. 403–15.
28. Grapow, *Ausdrücke*, pp. 52, 163–4 (wall), 172 (shield); Grimal, *Propagande*, pp. 322–35.
29. *EHR*, I, pp. 3, 26, 57; *ARE*, III, 224; *AEL*, II, p. 62; *HRR*, pp. 15, 21, 22, 73.
30. *HRR*, p. 16. Pharaoh protecting the army: Hornung in *MDIK*, 15 (1957), p. 126; and *Geschichte als Fest* (Darmstadt, 1966), p. 25; von der Way, *Textüberlieferung*, pp. 222–5; Grimal, *Propagande*, pp. 336–8.
31. *AEL*, II, p. 70. Von der Way, *Textüberlieferung*, p. 222, quotes Qenamun's boast (*EHR*, II, p. 110) to have never abandoned the king on the battlefield, as an indication that such flights did occur.
32. *EA*, 147.
33. *AEL*, II, p. 77 (Merneptah). On Ramesses III's insistence on peace cf. Grimal, *Propagande*, pp. 310–17.

Chapter 12 War as Elimination of the Rebels

1. The 'execration texts', best attested in the Middle Kingdom (Helck, *Beziehungen*, pp. 44–63), continue in use in later periods, cf. S. Schott in *ZÄS*, 65 (1930), pp. 35–42.
2. H. M. Kümmel, *Ersatzrituale für den hethitischen König* (Wiesbaden, 1967), p. 160; A. Lesky in *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 24 (1927), pp. 73–82.
3. R. H. Beal in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Leiden, 1995), p. 67. ('The figures were presumably both thrown into a fire, whereupon the cedar figure of the enemy burned up, while the clay figure of the Hittite was baked hard.')
4. H. Hoffner in *JBL*, 85 (1966), p. 331; N. Oettinger, *Die militärische Eide der Hethiter* (Wiesbaden, 1976), pp. 10–13. On Assyrian rituals cf. M. Elat in *BO*, 39 (1988), pp. 5–25; W. Mayer in *Or*, 57 (1988), pp. 145–64.
5. V. Haas in *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, 41/2 (1980), pp. 37–44.

6. *ANET*, pp. 354–5.
7. Grimal, *Propagande*, pp. 649–51.
8. *HRR*, p. 89.
9. *ARE*, II, 122.
10. On the formula ‘One came to say to his majesty that ...’ cf. Spalinger, *Documents*, pp. 1–33.
11. *KRIT*, III, p. 251. On ‘starting (hostilities)’ cf. Spalinger, *Documents*, pp. 56–7.
12. *KRIT*, IV, p. 8. On ‘planning (rebellion)’ cf. Spalinger, *Documents*, p. 67.
13. H. W. F. Saggs in *AfO Beiheft*, 19 (1982), p. 87; Harrak, *Hanigalbat*, pp. 100–2; P. Artzi, in *Michmanim*, 9 (1996), pp. 57–72; Oded, *War*, pp. 87–94 (oath infringement), 95–9 (rebellion).
14. *RIMA*, I, p. 236; cf. Oded, *War*, pp. 54–6 (pre-emptive war).
15. *BM*, I, p. 236.
16. *HRR*, pp. 13, 55, 72.
17. C. Brekelmans, *De Herem in het Oude Testament* (Nijmegen, 1959).
18. *Medinet Habu, I: Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III* (Chicago, IL, 1932), pl. 23, bottom. More common is the cutting of hands, *ibid.*, pls. 22–3, 42; cf. W. Helck in *GM*, 18 (1975), pp. 23–4.
19. *Medinet Habu, II: Later Historical Records of Ramses III* (Chicago, IL, 1932), pls. 88–9. Hittite material: A. Ünal in *Or*, 52 (1983), pp. 164–180; *SMEA*, 24 (1984), pp. 71–85.
20. *HRR*, pp. 37, 43; more examples in Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 111–13; *ARE*, III, 86, 88, 144, 147. Comments by E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, NY, 1982), pp. 180–1.
21. G. A. Gaballa in *JEA*, 55 (1968), p. 88.
22. *RIMA*, I, p. 236.
23. Terminology: E. Jenni in *Or* 47 (1978), pp. 351–9. Analysis: G. Di Bernardo in *Bibbia e Oriente*, 27 (1985), pp. 31–51, 235–53.
24. *ARE*, III 586; cf. III, 610.
25. P. Briant in *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne*, 2 (1976), pp. 163–258, 273–9.
26. *AM*, pp. 54–7.
27. Egyptian hunting ideology: W. Decker, *Die physische Leistung Pharaos* (Cologne, 1971), pp. 38–54, 145–50; M. A. Bonhême and A. Forgeau, *Pharaon. Les secrets du pouvoir* (Paris, 1988), pp. 210–17. The Assyrian view of war as hunt is best expressed in Tiglat-pileser’s poem translated in *BM*, I, pp. 248–9; cf. also Oded, *War*, pp. 149–51.
28. E. Hornung, in *Saeculum*, 22 (1971), pp. 54–5; *MDIK*, 15 (1957), pp. 126–8. Iconography: H. Schäfer in *WZKM*, 54 (1957), pp. 168–76; J. Sliwa in *Forschungen und Berichte*, 16 (1974), pp. 98–104; *LA*, II (1977), pp. 14–17; E. Swan Hall, *The Pharaoh Smites his Enemies* (Berlin, 1986). Phraseology: Grimal, *Propagande*, pp. 652–70.
29. *HDT*, p. 137; I follow *LM*, pp. 145–6 (but for the last line).
30. *HDT*, p. 141.
31. *ERAS*, pp. 138, 158.

Chapter 13 Conquest as a Cosmic Organization

1. A. Hermann, *Die ägyptische Königsnovelle* (Glückstadt, 1938); I. Shirun-Grumach, *Offenbarung, Orakel und Königsnovelle* (Wiesbaden, 1993).

2. H. Grapow in *ZÄS*, 67 (1931), pp. 34–8; H. Brunner in *AfO*, 17 (1954–56), pp. 141–5; S. Schott in *Studia Biblica et Orientalia*, III (Rome, 1959), pp. 319–30; E. Hornung in *ZÄS*, 81 (1956), pp. 28–32.
3. *ARE*, II, 416; translation by D. B. Redford in *Festschrift E. Edel* (Bamberg, 1979), pp. 338–42.
4. *KRIT*, I, 1d; K. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant* (Warminster, 1982), pp. 20–1. On this and the following text see A. Schulman in *JARCE*, 16 (1979), pp. 29–47.
5. *KRIT*, I, 4; Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant*, p. 22.
6. *AM*, pp. 192–3.
7. *ET*, pp. 18–27.
8. *AM*, pp. 112–13.
9. *HDT*, p. 156; H. Klengel in *Or*, 32 (1963), pp. 34 and 40.
10. *HRR*, pp. 24–5.
11. Grélois in *Hethitica*, 9 (1988), p. 85. Cf. also Abarru who unifies Kalashma and rules 'like a king': E. Laroche in *Les pouvoirs locaux en Mésopotamie* (Brussels, 1982), pp. 142–3.
12. *ARE*, IV, 398; cf. H. Goedicke in *WZKM*, 71 (1979), pp. 1–17; J. M. Kruchten in *AIPHOS*, 25 (1981), pp. 51–64.
13. E. Otto in *Saeculum*, 25 (1974), pp. 185–6; cf. Chapter 14.
14. *KRIT*, IV, pp. 8–9. On the Egyptian expression for prisoner as *sqr* 'nh' 'struck down alive' see W. Vycichl in *GM*, 2 (1972), pp. 43–5; Lorton in *JARCE*, 11 (1974), pp. 54–5, 67.
15. R. Givéon, *Les bédouïns Shosou des documents égyptiens* (Leiden, 1971), p. 73.
16. H. Freydank in *AOF*, 7 (1980), pp. 89–117; P. Garelli, D. Charpin and J. M. Durand in *Gesellschaft und Kultur im alten Vorderasien* (Berlin, 1982), pp. 69–76. For later developments B. Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden, 1979).
17. Von Schuler, *Kaššäer*, p. 146; J. M. González Salazar in *AuOr*, 12 (1994), pp. 159–76.
18. *ET*, pp. 12–15; cf. *OA*, 16 (1977), pp. 105–31.
19. Güterbock, in *JCS*, 10 (1956), pp. 95–6.
20. Kitchen in *JEA*, 50 (1964), p. 66. Cf. also *ARE*, IV, 141.
21. *RIMA*, I, p. 158; on Assyrian pacification Oded, *War*, pp. 101–20.
22. *ARE*, II, 437; cf. *ARE*, II, 473.
23. W. Helck in *MDOG*, 92 (1960), pp. 1–13; K. H. Bernhardt in *Beiträge zur sozialen Struktur des alten Vorderasien* (Berlin, 1971), pp. 133–47; W. J. Murnane, *The Road to Kadesh* (Chicago, IL, 1985), pp. 3–23.
24. On the archaeological evidence J. M. Weinstein in *BAŠOR*, 241 (1981), pp. 1–28.
25. On this first belt, the classical study by A. Alt in *Kleine Schriften* (Munich, 1959), III, pp. 107–140 still keeps its value.
26. On the flexible Egyptian frontier cf. L. Marfoe, *Between Qadesh and Kumidi*. PhD dissertation, Chicago, IL, 1978, pp. 493–531.
27. B. Kemp in *Imperialism in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 7–57; P. J. Frandsen in *Power and Propaganda* (Copenhagen, 1979), pp. 167–90; W. J. Murnane in *Amarna Diplomacy* (Baltimore, MD, and London, 2000), pp. 101–11.
28. V. Korošec in *RHA*, 66 (1960), pp. 65–79; *Iura*, 20 (1969), pp. 210–32; D. Arnaud in *Hethitica*, 8 (1987), pp. 9–27; G. Beckman in *Atti del II Congresso di Hittitologia* (Pavia, 1995), pp. 19–37.

29. *RHA*, 36 (1978), pp. 149–56.
30. P. Machinist in *Assur*, 3/2 (1982), pp. 1–37; J.N. Postgate in *Mesopotamia*, 18–19 (1983–84), pp. 229–34; Harrak, *Hanigalbat*, pp. 129–31, 190–205; E. Cancik, *Die mittellassyrische Briefe aus Tall Šeh Hamad* (Berlin, 1996), pp. 9–45.
31. *SAAB*, 2 (1988), pp. 81–98; J. N. Postgate in *World Archaeology*, 23 (1992), pp. 247–63.

Chapter 14 Peace as Submission

1. For example, *Medinet Habu, I. Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III* (Chicago, IL, 1932), pl. 38.
2. N. Reeves, *The Complete Tutankhamun* (London, 1980), p. 155. On phraseology cf. Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 129–31, also 117–18, 125–6.
3. H. Schäfer in *ZÄS*, 70 (1934), pp. 8–9.
4. W. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), pl. II; A. Badawy, *A History of Egyptian Architecture* (Berkeley, CA, 1968), pl. V; B. J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt* (London, 1989), fig. 77 on p. 224.
5. *Medinet Habu*, I-II, *passim*; cf. R. Anthes in *ZÄS*, 65 (1930), pp. 29–35.
6. M. Gruber, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East* (Rome, 1980), pp. 201–38; and the Horemheb relief in *ANEP*, n. 5, with comments *ibid.*, p. 250.
7. *AEL*, II, p. 33.
8. Cf. Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 76–8; B. Bryan in *Amarna Diplomacy* (Baltimore, MD, 2000), pp. 77–8.
9. Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 145–7.
10. J. A. Wilson in *JNES*, 7 (1948), p. 142; K. Baer in *JEA*, 50 (1964), pp. 179–80.
11. *EHR*, I, p. 4.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *EA*, 254; also *EA*, 156 and 157.
14. *AM*, pp. 56–7 and *passim*.
15. J.J. Janssen in *JEOL*, 17 (1963), pp. 141–7; A. Spalinger in *JSSEA*, 13 (1983), pp. 92–3.
16. H. Otten and V. Souček, *Das Gelübde der Königin Puduhepa* (Wiesbaden, 1965).
17. Grélois in *Hethitica*, 9 (1988), pp. 82–3.
18. *AOF*, 1 (1974), pp. 199–201.
19. *EA*, 74.
20. P. Artzi in *RA*, 58 (1964), pp. 159–66; M. Liverani in *MANE*, 1/5 (1979), pp. 14–20; A. Altman in *Bar-Ilan Studies in History* (Ramat Gan, 1978), pp. 3–24.

Chapter 15 Ordeal by War

1. On war in the Late Bronze age cf. A. Goetze (Hittites), J. Nougayrol (Ugarit) and W. von Soden (Assyria) in *Iraq*, 25/2 (1963), pp. 124–30, 110–23, 131–44. On Hittite war Ph. Houwink ten Cate in *Anatolica*, 11 (1984), pp. 55–74.
2. *HDT*, pp. 99–100.
3. *HDT*, pp. 35, 50, 56, 98.
4. *HDT*, p. 120, a letter whereby Shuppiluliuma solicits Ugarit's alliance against Nuhashe and Mukish.

5. A. Archi in *OA*, 13 (1974), pp. 113–14. Translated KIN texts in A. Ünal, *Hattušili III*, 1/2 (Heidelberg, 1974), pp. 32–102; von Schuler, *Kaškäer*, pp. 176–83.
6. Cf. A. Götze in *OLZ*, 39 (1929), coll. 832–8 for a Hittite account, opposite to the Egyptian (see Chapters 11 and 15).
7. A. K. Grayson in *Studies B. Landsberger* (Chicago, IL, 1965), pp. 337–42.
8. We have the reply of Ramesses: *ÄHK*, 24; cf. Chapter 11.
9. W. Röllig in *Heildeberger Studien zum Alten Orient* (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 177–81; Grayson in *Studies B. Landsberger*, pp. 337–9; J. A. Brinkman, in *BO*, 27 (1970), pp. 302–3.
10. Sh. Izre'el and I. Singer, *The General's Letter from Ugarit* (Tel Aviv, 1990), pp. 23–7.
11. M. Weinfeld in *History, Historiography and Interpretation* (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 121–47; for Egypt von der Way, *Textüberlieferung*, pp. 183–97 (Asiatic parallels pp. 197–99).
12. G. Furlani in *RHA*, 18 (1935), pp. 30–44; *Miscellanea G. Galbiati*, III (Milano, 1951), pp. 39–47; F. C. Fensham in *Studi E. Volterra*, VI (Milano, 1971), pp. 127–35; V. Korošec, *ibid.*, pp. 417–18.
13. Grélois, in *Hethitica*, 9 (1988), p. 79; cf. pp. 90–3.
14. *AM*, pp. 98–9.
15. Von Schuler, *Kaškäer*, pp. 170–1; R. Beal in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Leiden, 1995), p. 68.
16. J. van Seters, *In Search of History* (New Haven, CT, 1983), pp. 121–3. The juridical foundations of Hittite historiography are neglected by H. Cancik, *Grundzüge der hethitischen und alttestamentlichen Geschichtsschreibung* (Wiesbaden, 1976).
17. E. Hornung, *Geschichte als Fest* (Darmstadt, 1966); E. Otto in *WO*, 3/3 (1966), pp. 161–76; J. Assmann in *Saeculum*, 35 (1984), pp. 97–114.
18. Grélois, in *Hethitica*, 9 (1988), p. 29. On the 'Prodigienberichte' in Murshili's annals Cancik, *Grundzüge*, pp. 145–6.
19. *AM*, pp. 196–7, 148–9.
20. *AH*, pp. 24–5.
21. A. Götze, *Hattusilis* (Leipzig, 1925), pp. 48–9; H. Wolf, *The Apology of Hattusilis* (PhD dissertation, Brandeis University, 1967), p. 76.
22. *AH*, pp. 22–3. On 'divine justice' and 'judgement' cf. A. Archi in *SMEA*, 14 (1971), pp. 188–9; H. Hoffner in *Unity and Diversity* (Baltimore, MD, 1975), pp. 54–5; M. Giorgieri and C. Mora, *Aspetti della regalità ittita* (Pavia, 1996), pp. 37–43.
23. *AH*, pp. 22–3.
24. *BM*, I, pp. 209–29; edition and commentary by P. Machinist, *The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta* (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1978). I thank P. Machinist for allowing me to use his work here. On Assyrian ordeal-war Oded, *War*, pp. 29–41.
25. Machinist, *Epic*, pp. 519 and 522 uses the term 'Kulturkampf'; cf. pp. 527–8 on the probable inner opposition to Tukulti-Ninurta's Babylonian policy.
26. The pretext seems to have been a Babylonian merchant intercepted by the Assyrians on his way to Hatti, bearing a royal letter (*BM*, I, p. 215).
27. *BM*, I, p. 212; cf. Machinist's comments on pp. 156–9 (oath infringement) and 151–6 (abandonment by the gods, with parallels).

28. On the motif of divine abandonment and its connection with the plunder of cult statues cf. M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion* (Missoula, MT, 1974), pp. 9–41; cf. also Chapter 24.
29. *BM*, I, pp. 215–16.
30. *ABC*, p. 176.

Chapter 16 The Rules of War

1. On these aspects of war (the rules, the fixed space and time) I refer to J. Huizinga, *Homo ludens* (Haarlem, 1938).
2. Egyptian terminology S. Sauneron in *RE*, 15 (1963), pp. 51–4.
3. *BM*, I, p. 223.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
5. *AEL*, I, p. 104; cf. P. Seibert, *Die Charakteristik* (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 90–94 with suggested emendation ‘He communicates neither day nor place of battle.’ The rules of war have a long story in Egypt, from the king’s challenge to the rebel nomarch (R. Faulkner in *JEA*, 30 (1944), p. 62), to Piankhi’s order to his soldiers to wait until the enemy is ready (A. H. Gardiner in *JEA*, 21 (1935), pp. 219–23).
6. *AM*, pp. 132–3, 152–3; Güterbock, in *JCS*, 10 (1956), pp. 65–6; *AH*, pp. 10–11. On the positive Israelite evaluation of the conduct of nomadic origin, cf. A. Malamat in *Symposia Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the ASOR* (Cambridge, MA, 1979), pp. 45–6, 52–4.
7. Kashka attacking in occasion of a plague: Güterbock in *JCS*, 10 (1956), pp. 90–1; Houwink ten Cate in *JNES*, 25 (1966), pp. 169 and 178.
8. *AM*, pp. 50–3, 54–7, 62–3, 166–9. Enemies attacking when Arnuwanda is sick: *AM*, pp. 14–15.
9. *RIMA*, I, p. 184.
10. *AM*, pp. 126–9.
11. *AM*, pp. 156–9.
12. G. Beckman in *JCS*, 47 (1995), pp. 23–34.
13. *BM*, I, p. 218. Comparative material in P. Machinist, *The Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta* (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1978), pp. 247–56.
14. On the Old Testament formula P. Humbert in *ZAW*, 51 (1933), pp. 101–8; L. B. Kutler in *UF*, 19 (1987), pp. 95–9.
15. *HDT*, p. 46; G. Beckman in *Studies W.W. Hallo* (Bethesda, 1993), pp. 53–7.
16. Grélois in *Hethitica*, 9 (1988), p. 75.
17. *ABC*, pp. 174–5.
18. *AH*, pp. 22–5.
19. Güterbock in *JCS*, 10 (1956), pp. 84–5.
20. *ARI*, I, 934–9.
21. *ABC*, p. 163; *ARI*, I, 995.
22. *Ug.*, V, pp. 85–6.
23. *BM*, I, pp. 268–9.
24. Habachi, *Kamose*, pp. 33–4 (the spoken challenge), 36 (text of the challenge), 39–40 (Apophis’ statement).
25. *ARE*, II, 429.
26. Lackenbacher in *RA*, 76 (1982), pp. 144, 148–9.

27. J. J. Glück in *Acta Classica*, 7 (1964), pp. 25–31.
28. *BM*, I, p. 225.
29. *ARE*, II, 80.
30. *BM*, I, p. 225.
31. *AH*, pp. 12–13; cf. H. A. Hoffner in *CBQ*, 30 (1968), pp. 220–5; R. de Vaux in *Biblica*, 40 (1959), pp. 495–508; E. Blumenthal in *Festgabe für H. Brunner* (Wiesbaden, 1983), pp. 42–6.
32. J. Spiegel in *WZKM*, 54 (1957), pp. 191–203; S. Morenz in *Studies C. J. Bleeker* (Leiden, 1969), pp. 113–25.
33. P. Humbert, *La 'terou 'a'. Analyse d'un rite biblique* (Neuchatel, 1946).
34. *BM*, I, p. 225.
35. *BM*, I, pp. 218, 224; cf. the Erra epic (*BM*, II, p. 774) and the Sargon legend (J.G. Westenholz, *Legends of the Kings of Akkade* (Winona Lake, IN, 1997), p. 63). In general G. Bouthoul, *Traité de polémologie* (Paris, 1970), pp. 330–40.
36. Lackenbacher in *RA*, 76 (1982), pp. 141–9; cf. I. Singer in *ZA*, 75 (1985), pp. 100–23; Harrak, *Hanigalbat*, pp. 140–2, 185–6.
37. *KH*, 191.
38. Lackenbacher in *RA*, 76 (1982), pp. 142, 145 (translation mine).
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 142 and 145–6.
40. Cf. *LM*, pp. 145–6 ('They used to call your father a king who prepares for war but then stays home'); Habachi, *Kamose*, p. 33 ('Apophis plans in his heart brave things, which do not happen to him').
41. Lackenbacher in *RA*, 76 (1982), pp. 144, 148.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 148.

Chapter 17 The Battle of Megiddo

1. O. Carruba in *SMEA*, 18 (1977), pp. 160–161; A. Ünal in *SMEA*, 24 (1984), p. 74; S. De Martino, *L'Anatolia occidentale nel medio regno ittita* (Florence, 1996), pp. 13–22; P. Taracha in *WO*, 28 (1997), pp. 74–84.
2. K. Riemschneider in *JCS* 16 (1962), pp. 111–12. On Assyrian battles J. A. Scurlock in *Studies M.C. Astour* (Bethesda, MD, 1997), pp. 491–517.
3. A. Schulman in *JSSEA*, 10 (1979), pp. 118–34; in general A. Ferril, *The Origins of War* (London, 1985).
4. For example, *HRR*, pp. 12, 33.
5. J. Sliwa in *Forschungen und Berichte*, 16 (1974), pp. 112–16; Schulman in *JSSEA*, 10 (1979), p. 132.
6. M. Liverani in *Studi sull'Oriente e la Bibbia* (Genoa, 1967), pp. 51–2; D. Stuart in *BASOR*, 221 (1976), pp. 159–64.
7. *AEL*, II, pp. 32–3. Literary analysis in Spalinger, *Documents*, pp. 134–42. Historical reconstruction: H. Nelson, *The Battle of Megiddo* (Chicago, IL, 1913); R. O. Faulkner in *JEA*, 28 (1942), pp. 2–15; Helck, *Beziehungen*, pp. 122–5.
8. Nelson, *Battle*, p. 37: 'Still it is astonishing how little military wisdom the Asiatics seem to have displayed throughout this whole campaign.'
9. Faulkner in *JEA*, 28 (1942), p. 3.
10. *ARE*, II, 422.
11. Spalinger, *Documents*, pp. 136–7; *MDIK*, 30 (1974), pp. 221–9; *GM*, 33 (1979), pp. 47–54.

12. Faulkner in *JEA*, 28 (1942), p. 12, map II; Yeivin in *JNES*, 9 (1950), p. 105, fig. 2; Helck, *Beziehungen*, maps on pp. 201 and 203; Rainey in *Erls*, 15 (1981), pp. 61*–66*.
13. In comparing the two battles, Yeivin in *JNES*, 9 (1950), pp. 101–7 underscores similarities, not realizing the opposite conduct of the Asiatics in the two cases, and crediting the different issue to the Egyptian conduct.
14. *KRIT*, II, 3; *ARE*, III, 305–15, 316–27; *AEL*, II, pp. 57–72; A. H. Gardiner, *The Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramesses II* (Oxford, 1975). Rich bibliography in A. Kuschke in *ZDPV*, 95 (1979), pp. 7–35; also von der Way, *Textüberlieferung*; G. Fecht in *GM*, 80 (1984), pp. 23–53, 55–7; H. Goedicke, *Perspectives on the Battle of Kadesh* (Baltimore, MD, 1985).
15. Tefnin in *GM*, 47 (1981), pp. 55–76.
16. Von der Way, *Textüberlieferung*; J. Assmann in *Mannheimer Forum*, 83/84 (1988), pp. 175–230.
17. *ÄHK*, 24; Götze in *OLZ*, 39 (1929), coll. 823–38. See Chapters 11 and 15.
18. *ARE*, IV 62–8; *HRR*, pp. 49–58. On the narrative structure cf. E. Edel in *Mélanges Mokhtar*, I (Cairo, 1985), pp. 223–37; Helck in *SAK*, 14 (1987), pp. 129–45; Cifola in *Or*, 57 (1988), pp. 275–306.
19. On the adaptation of the traditional pattern to the new reality cf. Stadelmann in *Saeculum*, 19 (1968), pp. 156–71.

Chapter 18 Peace as Mutual Recognition

1. Foreignness is the etymology of *nakru*: Kestemont, *Diplomatique*, pp. 576, 585–8; *TWAT*, V, pp. 454–62; *THAT*, II, pp. 66–8, 919–35.
2. *HDT*, pp. 33–4 and similar passages in every vassal treaty.
3. *HDT*, p. 33 and similar passages in every vassal treaty.
4. *BM*, I, p. 218.
5. *PRU*, IV, pp. 284–5.
6. *PRU*, IV, p. 49; cf. *HDT*, p. 50.
7. F. Schachermeyr in *MAOG*, 4 (1928), pp. 180–6; Korošec, *Staatsverträge, passim*; von Schuler in *Historia, Einzelschriften*, 7 (Wiesbaden 1964), pp. 37–45; D. J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant* (Rome, 1978), pp. 37–85.
8. *OA*, 12 (1973), pp. 267–97.
9. The Shuppiluliuma–Shattiwaza treaties (*HDT*, pp. 37–49) and the new text of the Shunashura treaty have been dealt with by C. Zaccagnini in *I trattati nel mondo antico* (Rome, 1990), pp. 37–79.
10. *ANET*, p. 532; E. Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites* (Paris, 1971), pp. 163–4; H. Otten in *JCS*, 5 (1951), p. 129.
11. *HDT*, p. 14; G. Wilhelm in *Festschrift H. Otten* (Wiesbaden, 1988), pp. 362–365.
12. *HDT*, pp. 55, 60, 99.
13. *HDT*, p. 86.
14. *HDT*, p. 23.
15. A. Goetze in *JCS*, 22 (1968), pp. 7–8; *MHT*, 10 (1981), pp. 46–51, 55–6.
16. H. B. Huffman in *BASOR*, 181 (1966), pp. 31–7; 184 (1966), pp. 36–8.
17. *HDT*, p. 69.
18. Lorton, *Terminology*, p. 124.
19. Von der Way, *Textüberlieferung*, pp. 390–7; D. Sürenhagen, *Paritätische Staatsverträge aus hethitischer Sicht* (Pavia, 1985), pp. 76–9.

20. A. Kempinski and S. Košac in *WO*, 5 (1970), pp. 196–9; cf. also the Kashka treaties in von Schuler, *Kaškaer*, pp. 109–12, 140–5, and the Pahhuwa text in O. R. Gurney in *LAAS*, 28 (1948), pp. 32–47. Comments by von Schuler in *JKF*, II/1–2 (1965), pp. 445–64; E. Neu in *Festschrift K. Bittel* (Mainz, 1983), pp. 391–9.
21. *EA*, 138, 137.
22. *EA*, 114.

Chapter 19 The Ideology of Protection

1. *HDT*, p. 90.
2. *HDT*, p. 60.
3. *PRU*, III, pp. 80 and 140. Cf. H. Reviv in *IEJ*, 28 (1972), pp. 218–28.
4. Besides the Talmi-Sharruma treaty, already quoted, cf. *PRU*, IV, pp. 285–6; *EA*, 92.
5. *HDT*, p. 147.
6. *HDT*, p. 133; *LM*, pp. 139–40.
7. Liverani in *Le palais et la royauté* (Paris, 1974), pp. 335–8, 348–52.
8. *VT*, 24 (1974), pp. 438–53.
9. E. von Schuler, *Hethitische Dienstanweisungen für höhere Hof- und Staatsbeamte* (Graz, 1957), pp. 8–9.
10. *HDT*, p. 100; H. G. Güterbock in *History, Historiography and Interpretation* (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 29–30.
11. R. Stefanini in *RANL*, 20 (1965), pp. 39–79; C. Mora in *Athenaeum*, 66 (1988), pp. 553–76.
12. E. Laroche in *RA*, 47 (1953), pp. 70–8; H. Otten in *MDOG*, 94 (1963), pp. 1–6; *Jahresbericht des Instituts für Vorgeschichte der Universität Frankfurt*, 1976, pp. 22–35.
13. *PRU* IV, pp. 284–6.
14. *AM*, pp. 74–5.
15. N. Na'aman in *Abr Nahrain*, 33 (1995), pp. 116–18.
16. *HDT*, p. 133; *LM*, p. 140.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *HDT*, pp. 141–2. Kurigalzu is called 'small' in the sense of 'young', but the Assyrians could have applied to this epithet the political meaning of 'small king' as vassal.
19. *ABC*, p. 159; cf. Oded, *War*, pp. 139–40 (also pp. 61–8 on protection).
20. J. van Dijk in *Or*, 55 (1986), pp. 159–170.
21. *HDT*, p. 93. Last edition by E. Edel, *Der Vertrag zwischen Ramses II. von Ägypten und Hattušili III. von Hatti* (Berlin, 1997).
22. *RA*, 61 (1967), pp. 1–18; *AOF*, 1 (1974), pp. 175–205.
23. On the semantic problems cf. *Berytus* 31 (1983), pp. 54–5; on the political problems *AOF*, 1 (1974), pp. 184–7. My semantic approach has been misunderstood by N. Na'aman in R. Cohen and R. Westbrook (eds), *Amarna Diplomacy* (Baltimore, MD, and London, 2000), pp. 133–5.

Chapter 20 The Ideology of Brotherhood

1. 'Brotherhood' is mostly studied in the frame of Old Testament covenantal terminology, cf. P. Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant* (Rome, 1982). On

- family metaphors in the Amarna letters cf. R. Cohen in *International Negotiation*, 1 (1996), pp. 11–28; Liverani in *Amarna Diplomacy*, pp. 15–27.
2. H. Tadmor in *Society of Biblical Literature Centennial Address, 1980* (Chico, CA, 1982), pp. 127–52; M. Weinfeld in *JAOS*, 93 (1973), pp. 190–199; *UF*, 8 (1976), pp. 379–414.
 3. *EA*, 4.
 4. W. L. Moran in *JNES*, 22 (1963), pp. 173–6; M. Fox in *BASOR*, 209 (1973), pp. 41–2; I. Johag in *Festgabe für G. J. Botterweck* (Köln-Bonn, 1977), pp. 3–23.
 5. W. L. Moran in *CBQ*, 25 (1963), pp. 77–87; G. Schmuttermayr in *Biblica*, 51 (1970), pp. 499–543. On later developments cf. Y. Muffs in *Christianity, Judaism and other Greco-Roman Cults*, III (Leiden, 1975), pp. 1–36.
 6. *PRU*, IV, p. 294; contra F. C. Fensham in *Studies W. F. Albright* (Baltimore, MD, 1971), pp. 121–35.
 7. *PRU*, IV, p. 191; *LM*, p. 137.
 8. Habachi, *Kamose*, p. 39.
 9. Besides the cases of Idrimi, Rib-Adda, Hattushili, cf. also *HDT*, p. 39; *HDT*, pp. 77–8; *AM*, pp. 68–9; *PRU*, IV, pp. 121–2; etc.
 10. M. Liverani, in *Storia e dossier*, 14 (1988), pp. 22–6.
 11. *PRU*, IV, p. 133; cf. Zaccagnini, *Scambio*, p. 110.
 12. *KH*, 192; cf. Chapter 4.
 13. *KH*, 191.
 14. *ÄHK*, I-II.
 15. *HDT*, p. 122; Edel in *JKF*, 2 (1953), pp. 269, 264–5, 270. More data in Chapter 21.
 16. *CAD*, I/J, p. 282.
 17. *Ibid.*; p. 282; Kestemont, *Diplomatique*, pp. 446–7, 570–1; G. Buccellati, *Cities and Nations of Ancient Syria* (Rome, 1967), pp. 49–50.
 18. H. Schäfer in *MDIK*, 12 (1943), pp. 73–95; H. Goedicke in *Mélanges Mokhtar*, I (Cairo, 1985), pp. 307–24; Grimal, *Propagande*, pp. 317–21.

Chapter 21 Priority and Continuity of the Redistributive Pattern

1. For an interpretation of the Egyptian economic system in terms of redistribution cf. J. J. Janssen in *SAK*, 3 (1975), pp. 127–185. On the middle-Assyrian redistributive system H. Freydank in *AOF*, 4 (1976), pp. 127–130.
2. J. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore, MD, 1983), pp. 52–3.
3. M. B. Rowton in *JNES*, 26 (1967), pp. 261–77; E. Reiner in *JNES*, 15 (1956), pp. 129–49.
4. *ANET*, p. 356.
5. *KRIT*, II, 234; cf. J. Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égéen préhellénique* (Cairo, 1956), pp. 89–95 and 139; *Kush*, 7 (1959), pp. 130–3.
6. *LEM*, p. 200. On the Asiatic oils Helck, *Beziehungen*, pp. 398–402; M. Görg in *SAK*, 11 (1984), pp. 219–26.
7. *KRIT*, IV, p. 4. On this text, and its re-use by Sethos I (*KRIT*, I, 10), Ramesses II, Ramesses III, cf. Grimal, *Propagande*, pp. 454–66.
8. *RIMA*, I, pp. 272 and 275; cf. *ERAS*, pp. 154–55.

9. O. van der Plas, *L'hymne à la crue du Nil*, I (Leiden, 1986), p. 137: 'Il n'est personne dont la main tisse de l'or; il n'est pas d'homme qui s'énivre d'argent; on ne mange pas du vrai lapis-lazuli; l'orge est la base du bien-être!'

Chapter 22 Intervention of the Reciprocal Pattern

1. C. Zaccagnini in *Studi F. Pintore* (Pavia, 1983), pp. 189–253.
2. Full treatment by Zaccagnini, *Scambio*.
3. *EA*, 6; 35; cf. also *PRU*, VI 16; *Ug.*, V, p. 92; etc.
4. *EA*, 19. More examples in Zaccagnini, *Scambio*, pp. 100–8.
5. *EA*, 15–16; cf. P. Artzi in *Bar-Ilan Studies in History* (Ramat-Gan, 1978), pp. 25–41.
6. Zaccagnini, *Scambio*, pp. 59–61, 139–45.
7. *EA*, 9; cf. *EA*, 41.
8. *HDT*, p. 140.
9. *EA*, 11.
10. Chapter 19; Zaccagnini, *Scambio*, pp. 109–17.
11. *EA*, 20.
12. *Ug.*, V, pp. 118–19.
13. *EA*, 9.
14. *EA*, 16.
15. *EA*, 35.
16. *Ug.*, V, pp. 143–4.
17. J. Janssen, *Commodity Prices from the Ramessid Period* (Leiden, 1975), p. 510.
18. *EA*, 10.

Chapter 23 Accumulation vs. Circulation

1. E. Bresciani, *Letteratura e poesia dell'antico Egitto* (Turin, 1969), pp. 396–7.
2. *ARE*, IV, 182–412; H.D. Schadel, *Die Listen des grossen Papyrus Harris* (Glückstadt, 1936).
3. *EHR*, IV, p. 19.
4. *EHR*, I, p. 46.
5. Lorton, *Terminology*, p. 9 (n. 5); more examples could be easily provided.
6. *EHR*, I, p. 2.
7. *LEM*, pp. 439, 483.
8. *EA*, 35.
9. *EA*, 19.
10. *ÄHK*, 54.
11. *HDT*, p. 127.
12. A. Archi in *RSO*, 52 (1978), pp. 19–26.
13. *EA*, 4.
14. *EHR*, IV, p. 17.
15. M. Guilmot in *CdÉ*, 40 (1965), pp. 235–48.
16. *AEI*, II, pp. 139, 141; S. Allam, *Hieratische Ostraka und Papyri aus der Ramessidenzeit* (Tübingen, 1973), p. 99.
17. *BM*, II, pp. 808–9.
18. M. Kümmel, *Ersatzrituale für den hethitischen König* (Wiesbaden, 1967), p. 162.
19. J. J. Janssen in *JEA*, 68 (1982), pp. 253–8.

Chapter 24 Self-sufficiency vs. Interdependence

1. EA, 7.
2. EA, 4. Pintore, *Matrimonio*, pp. 11–12 already expressed doubts about the economic motivation of the pharaonic refusal of reciprocity. On the Egyptian royal endogamy J. Černý in *JEA*, 40 (1954), pp. 23–9; W. Helck in *CdE*, 87 (1969), pp. 22–5.
3. *HDT*, p. 128.
4. Liverani in R. Cohen and R. Westbrook (eds), *Amarna Diplomacy* (Baltimore, MD, and London, 2000), pp. 23–6.
5. EA, 4.
6. I. Vincentelli in *OA*, 11 (1972), pp. 133–5.
7. *KH*, 302; *AU*, pp. 242–3.
8. E. Edel, *Ägyptische Ärzte und ägyptische Medizin am hethitischen Königshof* (Opladen, 1976); C. Zaccagnini in *JNES*, 42 (1983), pp. 249–56.
9. J. V. Canby in *OA*, 15 (1976), pp. 33–42.
10. *HDT*, p. 132; cf. Edel, *Medizin*; G. M. Beckman, *Hittite Birth Rituals* (Wiesbaden, 1983), pp. 253–4.
11. EA, 23.
12. *BM*, I, p. 304; J. J. Roberts in *Essays J. J. Finkelstein* (Hamden, CT, 1977), pp. 183–7; A. Finet in *Akkadica*, 21 (1981), pp. 1–13.

Chapter 25 The Ideology of Life

1. *EHR*, I, pp. 29–32, 33–5; *ARE*, II 435, 459, 470, 500–1, 508, 532. Cf. H. Grapow, *Studien zu den Annalen Thutmosis des dritten* (Berlin, 1949), pp. 63–4.
2. *AEL*, II, p. 71; cf. *ARE*, II, 441.
3. *EHR*, I, p. 32.
4. Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 87–8, 139; cf. Punt in *ARE*, II, 256–7.
5. *EHR*, I, p. 39. Cf. *ARE*, II, 819, 820; more examples in Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 138–42.
6. R. J. Williams in *Studies J. A. Wilson* (Chicago, IL, 1969), pp. 93–4; Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 136–44; Grimal, *Propagande*, pp. 237–51; C. Grave in *OA* 19 (1980), pp. 205–18.
7. G. Furlani in *RANL*, 3 (1948), pp. 304–38; H. Hirsch in *AfO*, 22 (1968–69), pp. 39–58.
8. *HDT*, pp. 69, 96, 45. Cf. J. Wijngaards in *VT*, 17 (1967), pp. 226–39; C. Barth, *Die Errettung vom 'Tode' in den individuellen Klage- und Dankliedern des Alten Testaments* (Zürich, 1947), pp. 29–33, 61–3.
9. Grimal, *Propagande*, pp. 229–37.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 233, 257–58, 263.
11. *ARE*, III, 580; G. A. Wainwright in *JEA*, 46 (1960), pp. 24–8.
12. H. Klengel in *AOF*, 1 (1974), pp. 165–74.
13. *LEM*, p. 293.
14. J. Pitt Rivers, *The Fate of Shechem or the Politics of Sex* (Cambridge, 1977), ch. 5 'The Law of Hospitality'.
15. EA, 162.
16. EA, 238. Egyptian parallels in E. Otto in *ZÄS*, 87 (1962), pp. 150–4.

17. *EA*, 74, 121; cf. also 91, 85.
18. *EA*, 150, 155.

Chapter 26 Hatshepsut and Punt: Trade or Tribute?

1. E. Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari*, III (London, 1898), pls. LXIX–LXXVI; texts in *ARE*, II, 252–95.
2. R. Herzog, *Punt* (Glückstadt, 1968) is a good collection of data and literature, but unreliable on location and access; cf. K. A. Kitchen in *Or*, 40 (1971), pp. 184–207; G. Posener in *Annuaire du Collège de France*, 73 (1973), pp. 369–74.
3. On 'ntyw 'myrrh' (*Balsamodendron* sp.) and sntr 'incense' (*Boswellia* sp.), cf. F.N. Hepper in *JEA*, 55 (1969), pp. 66–72; A.-A. Saleh in *JEA*, 58 (1972), pp. 143–5; K. Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel* (Leiden, 1986), pp. 5–15.
4. A Punt–Egypt link through the Upper Nile (Herzog's thesis) is not ruled out (cf. Kitchen in *Or*, 40 (1971), pp. 191–192, Posener in *Ägypten und Kusch*, p. 341). On the long practice of trips to Punt cf. N. de Garis Davies in *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 30/II (1935), pp. 46–9; T. Säve Söderberg, *The Navy of the Eighteenth Egyptian Dynasty* (Uppsala, 1946), pp. 8–30.
5. *ARE*, II, 287.
6. Saleh in *Or*, 42 (1973), pp. 370–82; cf. A. Hermann in *Festschrift W. Caskel* (Leiden, 1968), pp. 189–90 (silent trade?).
7. S. Morenz, *Prestige-Wirtschaft im alten Ägypten* (Munich, 1969), pp. 35–6. Myrrh and incense, destined to be burnt, have a typical function of 'conspicuous consumption' (in the sense of T. Veblen).
8. The scene on the south wall is reconstructed by W. Stevenson Smith in *JARCE*, 1 (1962), pp. 59–60 and fig. at p. 61; *Interconnections*, pp. 138–9 and figs. 173–4.
9. Naville, *Temple*, pl. LXIX (metal rings, a sword, an axe, and a lot of bead necklaces).
10. *ARE*, II, 255, 260.
11. *ARE*, II, 261, 262.
12. *ARE*, II, 256. Pictures: Naville, *Temple*, pl. LXIX.
13. Gods as addressees of the exchange: Posener in *Annuaire du Collège de France*, 73 (1973), pp. 370–2. Hathor as 'lady' of the raw materials producing areas: R. Givon, *The Impact of Egypt on Canaan* (Göttingen, 1978), pp. 61–7.
14. Naville, *Temple*, pl. LXIX.
15. *ARE*, II, 257.
16. Naville, *Temple*, pl. LXXVI. Of course the Puntite 'tribute-bearers' are not necessarily the chiefs, they could be merchants, even slaves: the Egyptian public cannot distinguish.
17. *ARE*, II, 271.
18. *ARE*, II, 295; cf. Naville, *Temple*, pls. LXIX, LXXIV (transportation of trees in Punt), LXXIV (their embarking), LXXV (their shipment), LXXVIII (the trees in the temple courtyard). Cf. Dixon in *JEA*, 55 (1969), pp. 55–65.
19. Compare the size of the trees in Naville, *Temple*, pls. LXXVIII and LXIX.

Chapter 27 Wen-Amun and Zakar-Ba'al: Gift or Trade?

1. *ARE*, IV, 563–91; ANET, pp. 25–9; AEL II, pp. 224–30; Goedicke, *Wenamun*; G. Bunnens in *RSF*, 6 (1978), pp. 1–16.

2. K. A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt* (Warminster, 1973), §§ 14 and 209–10; Goedicke, *Wenamun*, pp. 1–11; *JSSEA*, 8/1 (1977), pp. 74–80.
3. *AEL*, II, p. 226.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *ANET*, p. 243 (Theban tomb n. 99).
6. *EA*, 126; cf. *MANE*, 1/5 (1979), pp. 3–13.
7. *EA*, 35.
8. *HDT*, p. 140; cf. Zaccagnini in *RSO*, 45 (1970), pp. 11–20.
9. *MANE*, 1/5 (1979), pp. 27–30.
10. *AEL*, II, p. 227.
11. A. W. Gouldner in *American Sociological Review*, 25 (1960), pp. 161–78; M. Sahlin in M. Banton (ed.), *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology* (London, 1968), pp. 139–236.
12. *AEL*, II, p. 228.
13. Abi-Ba'al inscription (on a statue of Sheshonq), H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, I–III (Wiesbaden, 1962–64), n. 5; cf. the similar Eli-Ba'al inscription (on a statue of Osorkon I), *ibid.*, n. 6.

Chapter 28 The Annals of Tuthmosis III: Tribute or Gift?

1. *ARE*, II, 391–540; *AEL*, II, pp. 29–35.
2. *ARE*, II, 407: 'His Majesty commanded to cause to be recorded his victories ... together with the plunder which his majesty carried away therein.'
3. Lorton in *JARCE*, 11 (1974), pp. 53–68; Grimal, *Propagande*, pp. 679–80.
4. *Wb.*, I, pp. 426–30; L. H. Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian*, I (Berkeley, CA, 1982), pp. 147–8. A more satisfactory arrangement is 'to produce' (and 'to let produce'); 'producer' (workforce of dependant status); 'production'. The analysis by Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 90–105, resulting in the meaning 'trade' cannot be accepted.
5. E. Graefe, *Untersuchungen zur Wortfamilie bꜣḏ-* (Cologne, 1971); R. Weill in *RÉ*, 3 (1938), pp. 69–79.
6. *ARE*, II, 514.
7. *ARE*, II, 446.
8. *ARE*, II, 513.
9. E. Bleiberg in *JSSEA*, 11 (1981), pp. 107–10.
10. J. Vercoutter in *Kush*, 7 (1959), pp. 120–53; G. Posener in *Ägypten und Kusch* (Berlin, 1977), pp. 337–42.
11. The Annals distinguish 'the product of Lebanon' (= timber) and 'the harvest of Djahi' (= agricultural products): *ARE*, II, 510, 519. For timber cf. *ARE*, II, 492 in T. Säve-Söderberg, *The Navy of the Eighteenth Egyptian Dynasty* (Uppsala, 1946), p. 44.
12. *ARE*, II, 482, 537.
13. *ARE*, II, 486, 513.
14. Lorton, *Terminology*, pp. 114–15.
15. Basically 'what one is obliged to pay', with different developments, from 'workmen's rations' (J. Janssen, *Commodity Prices from the Ramessid Period*, (Leiden, 1975), pp. 456–7) to 'impost' or 'taxes' (*LEM*, p. 386), to 'yoke' (*ibid.*, pp. 572–3). Cf. D. B. Redford in *Studies on the Ancient Palestinian World*

- (Toronto, 1972), pp. 141–56; J. M. Kruchten in *AIPHOS*, 24 (1980), pp. 39–52 ('mettre au travail').
16. *ARE*, II, 483; cf. 510, 519, 535. Lorton's deductions (*Terminology*, pp. 114–15) about treaties with reciprocal obligations are untenable.
 17. *EHR*, I, p. 5; *EHR*, I, p. 4 has the same connection *b'k* – *ḥtr* – yearly pace.
 18. *EHR*, II, p. 139.
 19. R. Müller-Wollermann in *GM*, 66 (1983), pp. 81–93 supports the meaning 'gift'; W. Boochs in *GM*, 71 (1984), pp. 61–6 supports the meaning 'tribute'.
 20. W. Stevenson Smith, *Interconnections in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, CT, 1965), p. 3; S. Morenz, *Prestige-Wirtschaft im alten Ägypten* (Munich, 1969), pp. 24–5; C. Aldred in *JEA*, 56 (1970), p. 111; W. F. Edgerton in *JNES*, 6 (1947), pp. 153–4.
 21. *ARE*, II, 485; cf. *EHR*, I, p. 32.
 22. *AEL*, II, p. 36.
 23. Theban tomb n. 100 (*ARE*, II, 761); cf. n. 91 (*EHR*, II, p. 819).
 24. Theban tomb n. 86 (*ARE*, II, 773).
 25. Theban tombs n. 84 (*JEA*, 27 (1941), pl. XIII; 28 (1942), pl. V), n. 85 (*JEA*, 20 (1934), pl. XXV), n. 89 (*JEA* 26 (1940), pls. XXII–XXV), etc.
 26. C. Aldred in *JEA*, 56 (1970), pp. 105–16.
 27. *EA*, 9, 15.
 28. *EA*, 5.
 29. *EA*, 1.

Chapter 29 The Origins of Tribute

1. *ERAS*, pp. 153–15.
2. *RIMA* II, p. 37. Assyrian terminology of tribute: J. Bär, *Der assyrische Tribut und seine Darstellung* (Neukirchen, 1996), pp. 3–10.
3. *RIMA*, II, p. 37.
4. *RIMA*, II, p. 42.
5. *RIMA* II, p. 37.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *HDT*, pp. 161–162.
8. *HDT*, p. 152; for the 'supplement' cf. *PRU*, IV, p. 41. Cf. Zaccagnini, *Scambio*, pp. 155–6, 179–89.
9. J. N. Postgate, *Taxation and Conscription in the Assyrian Empire* (Rome, 1974), pp. 283–4; cf. pp. 119–30, 154–5.
10. Postgate, *Taxation*, p. 159; the texts are published by E. Weidner in *AfO*, 10 (1935–36), pp. 33–44.
11. Postgate, *Taxation*, p. 160; cf. *CAD*, N, p. 254: 'audience gift'; J. J. Finkelstein in *JAOS*, 72 (1952), pp. 77–80. Also in the 'outwards' redistributive movements there is a distinction between the normal 'rations' and the king's 'gifts': H. Freydank in *AOF*, 1 (1974), p. 73.
12. K. F. Müller, *Das assyrische Ritual* (Leipzig, 1937), pp. 8–19.
13. R. H. Pfeiffer and E. A. Speiser, *One Hundred New Selected Nuzi Texts* (New Haven, CT, 1936), pp. 18 and 73. Cf. H. M. Kümmel in *Korruption im Altertum* (Munich and Vienna, 1982), pp. 55–64.

14. Cf. Finkelstein in *JAOS*, 72 (1952), p. 78. On *ṭa'tu* in the Old Assyrian trade documents cf. K. R. Veenhof, *Aspects of Old Assyrian Trade and its Terminology* (Leiden, 1972), pp. 219–302.
15. *RIMA* I, p. 136. On the *ṭa'tu* motif in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions cf. H. Tadmor and M. Cogan in *Biblica*, 60 (1979), pp. 499–503; Liverani in *Mesopotamia*, 17 (1982), pp. 58 and 61–3.

Chapter 30 Equal vs. Unequal Marriages

1. *EA*, 1; Pintore, *Matrimonio*, pp. 25–6.
2. *EA*, 1.
3. The 'Babylonian disappeared princess' is still a recurrent motif in the thirteenth century, cf. *HDT*, p. 129 and Pintore, *Matrimonio*, pp. 39, 57.
4. *EA*, 4.
5. *EA*, 99.
6. On inter-dynastic negotiations in the Late Bronze age cf. Pintore, *Matrimonio*; A. R. Schulman in *JNES*, 38 (1979), pp. 177–93; J. J. van Dijk in *Or*, 55 (1986), pp. 159–70; S. Meier in R. Cohen and R. Westbrook (eds), *Amarna Diplomacy*, (Baltimore, MD, and London, 2000), pp. 165–73.
7. *EA*, 11. See Zaccagnini, *Scambio*, pp. 21–2.
8. *ARE*, II, 447.
9. *KRIT*, IV, p. 37; cf. C. Blankenberg van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III* (Leiden, 1969), p. 18; B. Bryan in *Amarna Diplomacy*, pp. 79–81.
10. *AEL*, II, pp. 200–203.
11. *HDT*, p. 96.
12. *ARE*, II, 467.
13. The identification of the sender as widow of Amenophis IV or Tutankhamun is much discussed but irrelevant here.
14. *ANET*, p. 319.
15. *ABC*, pp. 159, 171–2.
16. C. Robins in *GM* 62 (1983), pp. 67–77.
17. H. G. Güterbock in *RHA*, 66 (1960), pp. 57–63; Liverani in *SMEA*, 14 (1971), pp. 161–2; Th. Van den Hout in *ZA*, 84 (1994), pp. 60–88.
18. Pintore, *Matrimonio*, pp. 39, 41 (*nbt t'wy* title), 105.
19. *KRIT*, II, 69.
20. *KRIT*, II, 68.
21. *KRIT*, II, 66.
22. *KRIT*, II, 69.
23. *Or*, 59 (1990), pp. 207–17.
24. *KRIT*, II 66.
25. *ÄHK*, 53 (Puduhepa to Ramesses); cf. *ÄHK*, 51.
26. *ABC*, p. 165.

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